THE

OLD MANOR HOUSE.

A

NOVEL.

12614 bb 26

P. Condé sculp.

Oh! Time has Changed me since you saw me last,
And heavy Hours with Time's deforming Hand,
Have written strange Defeatures in my Face.

Published May 25th 1797. by Cadell and Davies Strand.

THE

OLD MANOR HOUSE.

A

NOVEL,

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

By CHARLOTTE SMITH.

VOL. I.

Nè fune intorto crederò che ſtringa
Soma coſi, nè coſi legno chiodo,
Come la fe, che una bella alma cinga
Del ſuo tenace, indiſſolubil nodo.

ARIOSTO—Cant xxi. Stanza 1.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. BELL, NO. 148, OXFORD-STREET.

MDCCXCIII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE

OLD MANOR HOUSE.

CHAP. I.

IN an old Manor Houſe in one of the moſt ſouthern counties of England, reſided ſome few years ſince the laſt of a family that had for a long ſeries of years poſſeſſed it. Mrs. Rayland was the only ſurvivor of the three co-heireſſes of Sir Hildebrand Rayland; one of the firſt of thoſe to whom the title of Baronet had been granted by James the Firſt. The name had been before of great antiquity in the county—and the laſt baronet having only daughters to ſhare his extenſive poſſeſſions, theſe

ladies had been educated with ſuch very high ideas of their own importance, that they could never be prevailed upon to leſſen, by ſharing it with any of thoſe numerous ſuitors, who for the firſt forty or fifty years of their lives ſurrounded them; and Mrs. Barbara the eldeſt, and Mrs. Catharine the youngeſt, died ſingle—one at the age of ſeventy, and the other at that of ſixty-eight: by which events the ſecond, Mrs. Grace, ſaw herſelf at the advanced age of ſixty-nine ſole inheritor of the fortunes of her houſe, without any near relation, or indeed any relation at all whom ſhe choſe to conſider as entitled to poſſeſs it after her death.

About four miles from the ancient and ſplendid ſeat ſhe inhabited, dwelt the only perſon who could claim any affinity with the Rayland family: this was a gentleman of the name of Somerive; who was conſidered by the people of the country as heir at law, as he was the grandſon of one of the ſiſters of Sir Hildebrand: but

Mrs.

Mrs. Rayland herſelf, whoſe opinion was more material, ſince it was all at her own diſpoſal, did not by any means ſeem to entertain the ſame idea.

The venerable lady, and her two ſiſters, had never beheld this their relation with the eyes of friendly intereſt; nor had they ever extended towards him that generous favour which they had ſo much the power to afford, and which could not have failed to prove very acceptable; ſince he had married early in life, and had a family of two ſons and four daughters to ſupport on the produce of an eſtate, which, though he farmed it himſelf, did not bring in a clear five hundred pounds a year.

Various reaſons, or rather prejudices, had concurred to occaſion this coolneſs on the part of the ladies towards their couſin.—Their aunt, who had married his anceſtor, had, as they had always been taught, degraded herſelf extremely, by giving herſelf to a man who was a mere yeoman.—The ſon of this union had however been re-

ceived and acknowledged as the couſin of the illuſtrious heireſſes of the houſe of Rayland; but following moſt plebeian-like the unaſpiring inclination of his own family, he had fallen in love with a young woman, who lived with them as companion; when it was believed that, as he was a remarkably handſome man, he might have lifted his eyes with impunity to one of the ladies, his couſins: this occaſioned an eſtrangement of many years, and had never been forgiven.—The recollection of it returned with acrimonious violence, when the ſon of this imprudent man imitated his father, five-and-twenty afterwards, and married a woman, who had nothing to recommend her but beauty, ſimplicity, and goodneſs.

However, notwithſtanding the repeated cauſes of complaint which this luckleſs family of Somerive had given to the auſtere and opulent inhabitants of Rayland Hall, the elder lady had on her death-bed recollected, that, though debaſed by

by the alloy of unworthy alliances, they carried in their veins a portion of that blood which had circulated in thoſe of the auguſt perſonage Sir Orlando de Rayland her grandfather; and ſhe therefore recommended Mr. Somerive and his family, but particularly his youngeſt ſon (who was named, by reluctantly obtained permiſſion, after Sir Orlando), to the conſideration of her ſiſters, and even gave to Mr. Somerive himſelf a legacy of five hundred pounds; a gift which her ſiſters took ſo much amiſs (though they poſſeſſed between them a yearly income of near twice five thouſand), that it had nearly rendered her injunction abortive; and they treated the whole family for ſome time afterwards with the greateſt coolneſs, and even rudeneſs; as if to convince them, that though Mrs. Rayland had thus acknowledged their relationſhip, it gave them no claim whatever on the future kindneſs of her ſurviving ſiſters.

For ſome years afterwards the dinners, to

which in great form the whole family were invited twice a year, were entirely omitted, and none of them admitted to the honour of viſiting at the Hall but Orlando, then a child of nine or ten years old; and even his introduction was principally owing to the favour of an old lady, the widow of a clergyman, who was among the ancient friends of the family, that ſtill enjoyed the privilege of being regularly ſent for in the old family coach, once a year; a cuſtom which, originating in the days of Sir Hildebrand, was ſtill retained.

This lady was a woman of ſenſe and benevolence, and had often attempted to do kind offices to the Somerive family with their rich maiden relations; but the height of her ſucceſs amounted to no more, than obtaining a renewal of the very little notice that had ever been taken of them, after thoſe capricious fits of coldneſs which ſometimes happened; and once, ſome time after the death of the elder Mrs. Rayland, bringing Orlando to the Hall in her hand

hand (whom ſhe had met by chance fiſhing in a ſtream that ran through their domain), without being chidden for encouraging an idle child to catch minnows, or for leading him all dirty and wet into their parlour, at a time when the beſt embroidered chairs, done by the hands of dame Gertrude Rayland, were actually unpapered, and uncovered for the reception of company.

There was indeed in the figure, face and manner of the infant Orlando, ſomething ſo irreſiſtible, that if Meſdames Alecto, Tiſiphone, and Megara had ſeen him, they would probably have been ſoftened in his favour—And this ſomething had always ſo pleaded for him with the three equally formidable ladies his relations, that notwithſtanding the oppoſition of their favourite maid, who was in perſon and feature well worthy to make the fourth in ſuch a group, the tales of their old and confidential butler, who did not admire the introduction of any competitor whatever, Orlando had always been in ſome

degree of favour—even when his father, mother and ſiſters were ſhut out, and his elder brother entirely diſclaimed as a wild and incorrigible boy, who had been caught in the fact of hunting divers cats, and ſhooting one of their guinea hens—Orlando, though not at all leſs wild than his brother, and too artleſs to conceal his vivacity, was ſtill endured—A new half crown from each of the ladies was preſented to him on every return to ſchool, together with abundance of excellent advice; and if any one obſerved that he was a remarkably handſome boy, the ladies never contradicted it; though, when the ſame obſervation was made as to the reſt of the family, it was declared to be moſt abſurd and utterly unfounded in truth.—To the beauty indeed of any female the ladies of Rayland Hall had a particular objection, but that of the Miſs Somerives was above all obnoxious to them—Nor could they ever forget the error the grandfather of theſe children had committed in marrying for her beauty

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the young woman, whoſe poverty having reduced her to be their humble companion, they had conſidered as an inferior being, and had treated with ſupercilious inſolence and contempt.—To thoſe therefore to whom her unlucky beauty was tranſmitted, they bore irreconcileable enmity, even in the ſecond generation; and had any one been artful enough to have ſuggeſted that Orlando was like his grandmother, it would probably have occaſioned the loſs of even the ſlight ſhare of favour he poſſeſſed.

When Orlando was about twelve years old, the younger of the three antique heireſſes died: ſhe left not however even a ſmall legacy to the Somerive family, but gave every thing ſhe poſſeſſed to her ſurviving ſiſter. Yet even by this lady, though the coldeſt and moſt unſociable tempered of the three, Orlando was not entirely forgotten—ſhe left him the bible ſhe always uſed in her cloſet, and ten pounds to buy mourning: the other members of his family were not even named.

One only of the Mrs. Raylands now remained; a woman, who, except regularly keeping up the payment of the annual alms, which had by her anceſtors been given once a year to the poor of her pariſh, was never known to have done a voluntary kindneſs to any human being: and though ſhe ſometimes gave away money, it was never without making the wretched petitioner pay moſt dearly for it, by many a bitter humiliation—never, but when it was ſurely known, and her great goodneſs, her liberal donation to ſuch and ſuch people, were certainly related with exaggeration, at the two market towns within four or five miles of her houſe.

With a very large income, and a great annual ſaving, her expences were regulated exactly by the cuſtoms of her family.—She lived, generally alone, at the Old Hall, which had not received the ſlighteſt alteration, either in its environs or its furniture, ſince it was embelliſhed for the marriage of her father Sir Hildebrand, in 1698.

Twice

Twice a year, when courts were held for the manors, there were tenants feaſts—and twice there was a grand dinner, to which none were admitted but a neighbouring nobleman, and the two or three titled people who reſided within ten miles.—— Twice too in the courſe of the year the family of Somerive were invited in form; but Mrs. Rayland generally took the ſame opportunity of aſking the clergy of the ſurrounding country with their wives and daughters, the attorneys and apothecaries of the adjoining towns with theirs, as if to convince the Somerives that they were to expect no diſtinction on account of the kindred they claimed to the houſe of Rayland.—— And indeed it was on theſe occaſions that Mrs. Rayland ſeemed to take peculiar pleaſure in mortifying Mrs. Somerive and her daughters; who dreaded theſe dinner days as thoſe of the greateſt penance; and who at Chriſtmas, one of the periods of theſe formal dinners, have bleſt more than once the propitious ſnow; through which

that important and magiſterial perſonage, the body coachman of Mrs. Rayland, did not chooſe to venture himſelf, or the ſix ſleek animals of which he was ſole governor; for on theſe occaſions it was the eſtabliſhed rule to ſend for the family, with the ſame ſolemnity and the ſame parade that had been uſed ever ſince the firſt ſullen and reluctant reconciliation between Sir Hildebrand and his ſiſter; when ſhe dared to deviate from the faſtidious arrogance of her family, and to marry a man who farmed his own eſtate—and who, though long ſettled as a very reſpectable landowner, had not yet written Armiger after his name.

But when the ſnow fell not, and the ways were paſſable; or when in ſummer no excuſe was left, and the rheumatiſm of the elder, or the colds of the younger ladies could not be pleaded; the females of the family of Somerive were compelled to endure in all their terrific and tedious forms the grand dinners at the Hall. And though

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on theſe occaſions the mother and the daughters endeavoured, by the ſimplicity of their dreſs, and the humility of their manners, to diſarm the haughty diſlike which Mrs. Rayland never took any pains to conceal, they never could obtain from her even as much common civility as ſhe deigned to beſtow on the ladies who were not connected with her; and Mr. Somerive had often been ſo much hurt by her ſupercilious behaviour towards his wife and daughters, that he had frequently reſolved they ſhould never again be expoſed to endure it. But theſe reſolutions his wife, hateful as the ceremony was to her, always contrived to prevail upon him to give up, rather than incur the hazard of injuring her family by an unpardonable offence againſt a capricious and ill-natured old woman, who, however oddly ſhe behaved, was ſtill by many people believed to intend giving all her fortune to thoſe who had undoubtedly the beſt claim to it: others indeed thought, with more appearance of probability,

bability, that ſhe would endow an hoſpital, or divide it among public charities.

When the young Orlando was at home, and accompanied his family in theſe viſits, the auſtere viſage of Mrs. Rayland was alone ſeen to relax into a ſmile—and as he grew older, this partiality was obſerved evidently to increaſe, inſomuch that the neighbours obſerved, that whatever averſion the old lady had to feminine beauty, ſhe did not deteſt that which nature had very liberally beſtowed on Orlando.—He was now ſeventeen, and was not only one of the fineſt looking lads in that country, but had long ſince obtained all the knowledge he could acquire at a neighbouring grammar ſchool; from whence his father now took him, and began to conſider of plans for his future life.—The eldeſt ſon, who would, as the father fondly hoped, ſucceed to the Rayland eſtate, he had ſent to Oxford, where he had been indulged in his natural turn to expence; and his father had ſuffered him to live rather

ther ſuitably to what he expected than to what he was ſure of.—In this Mr. Somerive had acted extremely wrong; but it was from motives ſo natural, that his error was rather lamented than blamed.—An error however, and of the moſt dangerous tendency, he had now diſcovered it to be; young Somerive had violent paſſions, and an underſtanding very ill ſuited to their management.—He had early in life ſeized with avidity the idea, which ſervants and tenants were ready enough to communicate, that he muſt have the Rayland eſtate; and had very thoughtleſsly expreſſed this, to thoſe who failed not to repeat it to their preſent miſtreſs, tenacious of her power, and jealous of every attempt to encroach on her property.—He had beſides treſpaſſed on ſome remote corners of her manors; and her game-keeper had repreſented him as a terrible depredator among her partridges, pheaſants, and hares. Theſe offences, added to the cat chaſes, and tieing caniſters to the tails of certain dogs, of which

which he had been convicted in the early part of his life, had made ſo deep an impreſſion againſt him, that now, whenever he was at home, the family were never aſked; and inſenſibly, from calling now and then to enquire after her while ſhe lay ill of a violent fit of the gout, Orlando had been admitted to drink his tea at the Hall, then to dine there; and at laſt, as winter came on with ſtormy evenings and bad roads, he had been allowed to ſleep in a little tapeſtry room, next to the old library at the end of the north wing—a diviſion of the houſe ſo remote from that inhabited by the female part (or indeed by any part) of the family, that it could give no ideas of indecorum even to the iron prudery of Mrs. Rayland herſelf.

Though Orlando was of a temper which made it impoſſible for him to practiſe any of thoſe arts by which the regard of ſuch a woman could be ſecured; and though the degree of favour he had obtained was long rather a miſery than a pleaſure to him; his

brother beheld the progreſs he made with jealouſy and anger; and began to hate Orlando for having gained advantages of which he openly avowed his diſdain and contempt.—As his expences, which his father could no longer ſupport, had by this time obliged him to quit the univerſity, he was now almoſt always at home; and his ſneering reproaches, as well as his wild and unguarded converſation, rendered that home every day leſs pleaſant to Orlando—while the quiet aſylum he had obtained at the Hall, in a room adjoining to that where a great collection of books were never diſturbed in their long ſlumber by any human being but himſelf, endeared to him the gloomy abode of the Sybil, and reconciled him to the penance he was ſtill obliged to undergo; for he was now become paſſionately fond of reading, and thought the uſe of ſuch a library cheaply earned by acting as a ſort of chaplain, reading the pſalms and leſſons every day, and the ſervice in very bad weather; with a ſermon

a ſermon on Sunday evening. And he even gradually forgot his murmurings at being impriſoned on Sundays and on Fridays in the great old long-bottomed coach, while it was dragged in a moſt ſolemn pace either to the next pariſh church, which was indeed at but a ſhort diſtance from the manſion, or to that of a neighbouring town, whither, on ſome propitious and ſunny days of ſummer, the old lady loved to proceed in ſtate, and to diſplay to her ruſtic or more enlightened neighbours a ſpecimen of the magnificence of the laſt century. But as hiſtory muſt conceal no part of the truth, from partiality to the hero it celebrates, it muſt not be denied that the young Orlando had, though inſenſibly and almoſt unknown to himſelf, another motive for ſubmitting with a good grace to paſs much of his time in a way, for which, thinking as he thought, the proſpect of even boundleſs wealth could have made him no compenſation.—To explain this, it may be neceſſary to deſcribe the perſons

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who from his ninth year, when he became firſt ſo much diſtinguiſhed by Mrs. Rayland, till his eighteenth, compoſed the houſehold, of which he, during that period, occaſionally made a part.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

THE confidential ſervant, or rather companion and femme de charge, of Mrs. Rayland, was a woman of nearly her own age, of the name of Lennard.—This perſon, who was as well as her miſtreſs a ſpinſter, had been well educated; and was the daughter of a merchant who loſt the fruits of a long courſe of induſtry in the fatal year 1720. He died of a broken heart, leaving his two daughters, who had been taught to expect high affluence, to the mercy of the world. Mrs. Rayland, whoſe pride was gratified in having about her the victim of unſucceſsful trade, for which ſhe had always a moſt profound contempt, received Mrs. Lennard as her own ſervant. She was however ſo much ſuperior

perior to her miſtreſs in underſtanding, that ſhe ſoon governed her entirely; and while the mean pliability of her ſpirit made her ſubmit to all the contemptuous and unworthy treatment, which the paltry pride of Mrs. Rayland had pleaſure in inflicting, ſhe ſecretly triumphed in the conſciouſneſs of ſuperior abilities, and knew that ſhe was in fact the miſtreſs of the ſupercilious being whoſe wages ſhe received.

Every year ſhe became more and more neceſſary to Mrs. Rayland, who, after the death of both her ſiſters, made her not only governeſs of her houſe, but her companion. Her buſineſs was to ſit with her in her apartment when ſhe had no company; to read the newſpaper; to make tea; to let in and out the favourite dogs (the taſk of combing and waſhing them was transferred to a deputy); to collect and report at due ſeaſons intelligence of all that happened in the neighbouring families; to give regular returns of the behaviour of all the ſervants, except the old butler and

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the old coachman, who had each a juriſdiction of their own; to take eſpecial care that the footmen and helpers behaved reſpectfully to the maids (who were all choſen by herſelf, and exhibited ſuch a group, as ſecured, better than her utmoſt vigilance, this decorous behaviour from the male part of the family); to keep the keys; and to keep her miſtreſs in good humour with herſelf, and as much as poſſible at a diſtance from the reſt of the world; above all from that part of it who might interfere with her preſent and future views; which certainly were to make herſelf amends for the former injuſtice of fortune, by ſecuring to her own uſe a conſiderable portion of the great wealth poſſeſſed by Mrs. Rayland.

Of the accompliſhment of this ſhe might well entertain a reaſonable hope; for ſhe was ſome few years younger than her miſtreſs (though ſhe artfully added to her age, whenever ſhe had occaſion to ſpeak of it), and was beſides of a much better conſtitution,

conſtitution, poſſeſſing one of thoſe frames, where a good deal of bone and no fleſh ſeem to defy the gripe of diſeaſe. The ſiſter of this Mrs. Lennard had experienced a very different deſtiny—She had been taken at the time of her father's miſfortunes into the family of a nobleman, where ſhe had married the chaplain, and retired with him on a ſmall living, where ſhe died in a few years, leaving ſeveral children; among others a daughter, to whom report imputed uncommon beauty; and ſcandal a too intimate connexion with the noble patron of her father. Certain it is, that on his marriage he gave her a ſum of money, and ſhe married a young attorney, who was a kind of ſteward, by whom ſhe had three children; of which none ſurvived their parents but a little girl born after her father's death; and whoſe birth occaſioned that of her mother. To this little orphan, her great aunt Mrs. Lennard, who with all her ſtarched prudery had a conſiderable ſhare of odd romantic whim

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in her compoſition, had given the dramatic and uncommon name of Monimia—Such at leaſt was the hiſtory given in Mrs. Rayland's family of an infant girl, which at about four years old had been by the permiſſion of her patroneſs taken, as it was ſaid, from nurſe, at a diſtant part of the county, and received by Mrs. Lennard at Rayland Hall; where ſhe at firſt never appeared before the lady but by accident, but was the inhabitant of the houſe-keeper's room, and under the immediate care of the ſtill-room maid, who was a perſon much devoted to Mrs. Lennard.

Mrs. Rayland had an averſion to children, and had conſented to the admiſſion of this into her houſe, on no other condition, but that ſhe ſhould never hear it cry, or ever have any trouble about it.—Her companion eaſily engaged for that; as Rayland Hall was ſo large, that *les enfans trouvés* at Paris might have been the inhabitants of one of its wings, without alarming

alarming a colony of ancient virgins at the other. The little Monimia, though ſhe was deſcribed as having been

"The child of miſery, baptized in tears," LANGHORN.

was not particularly diſpoſed to diſturb, by infantine expreſſions of diſtreſs, the chaſte and ſilent ſolitudes of the Hall; for though her little fair countenance had at times ſomething of a melancholy caſt, there was more of ſweetneſs than of ſorrow in it; and if ſhe ever ſhed tears, they were ſo mingled with ſmiles, that ſhe might have ſat to the painter of the Seaſons for the repreſentative of infant April. Her beauty however was not likely to recommend her to the favour of her aunt's affluent patroneſs; but as to recommend her was the deſign of Mrs. Lennard, ſhe ſaw that a beauty of four or five years old would be much leſs obnoxious than one of fifteen, or even nine or ten; and therefore ſhe contrived to introduce her by degrees; that when ſhe grew older, her charms, by being long ſeen, might loſe their power to offend.

She contrived that Mrs. Rayland might firſt ſee the little orphan as by chance; then ſhe ſent her in, when ſhe knew her miſtreſs was in good humour, with a baſket of fruit; an early pine; ſome preſerves in brandy, or ſomething or other which was acceptable to her lady's palate; and on theſe occaſions Monimia acquitted herſelf to a miracle; and preſented her little offering, and made her little curtſey, with ſo much innocent grace, that Hecate in the midſt of her rites might have ſuſpended her incantations to have admired her. At ſix years old ſhe had ſo much won upon the heart of Mrs. Rayland, that ſhe became a frequent gueſt in the parlour, and ſaved her aunt the trouble of opening the door for Bella, and Pompey, and Julie. From the tenderneſs of her nature ſhe became an admirable nurſe for the frequent litters of kittens, with which two favourite cats continually increaſed the family of her protectreſs; and the numerous daily applications from robins and ſparrows under the windows,

windows, were never ſo well attended to as ſince Monimia was entruſted with the care of anſwering their demands.

But her name—Monimia—was an inceſſant occaſion of reproach—"Why," ſaid Mrs. Rayland, "why would you, Lennard, give the child ſuch a name? As the girl will have nothing, why put ſuch romantic notions in her head, as may perhaps prevent her getting her bread honeſtly?—Monimia!—I proteſt I don't love even to repeat the name; it puts me ſo in mind of a very hateful play, which I remember ſhocked me ſo when I was a mere girl, that I have always deteſted the name. Monimia!—'tis ſo very unlike a Chriſtian's name, that, if the child is much about me, I muſt inſiſt upon having her called Mary."

To this Mrs. Lennard of courſe conſented, excuſing herſelf for the romantic impropriety of which her lady accuſed her, by ſaying, that ſhe underſtood Monimia ſignified an orphan, a perſon left alone and deſerted; and therefore had given it to a

child who was an orphan from her birth—but that, as it was diſpleaſing, ſhe ſhould at leaſt never be called ſo. The little girl then was Mary in the parlour; but among the ſervants, and with the people around the houſe, ſhe was ſtill Monimia.

Among thoſe who fondly adhered to her original name was Orlando; who, when he firſt became a frequent viſitor as a ſchool-boy at the Hall, ſtole often into the ſtill-room to play with the little girl, who was three years younger than himſelf—and inſenſibly grew as fond of her as of one of his ſiſters. Mrs. Lennard always checked this innocent mirth; and when ſhe found it impoſſible wholly to prevent two children who were in the ſame houſe from playing with each other, ſhe took every poſſible precaution to prevent her lady's ever ſeeing them together; and threatened the ſevereſt puniſhment to the little Monimia, if ſhe at any time even ſpoke to Maſter Somerive, when in the preſence of Mrs. Rayland.——But nothing could be ſo

irkſome to a healthy and lively child of nine or ten years old, as the ſort of confinement to which Monimia was condemned in conſequence of her admiſſion to the parlour; where ſhe was hardly ever ſuffered to ſpeak, but ſat at a diſtant window, where, whether it was winter or ſummer, ſhe was to remain no otherwiſe diſtinguiſhed from a ſtatue than by being employed in making the houſehold linen, and ſometimes in ſpinning it with a little wheel which Mrs. Rayland, who piqued herſelf upon following the notable maxims of her mother, had bought for her, and at which ſhe kept her cloſely employed when there was no other work to do.—When any company came, then and then only ſhe was diſmiſſed; but this happened very rarely; and many many hours poor Monimia vainly prayed for the ſight of a coach or chaiſe at the end of the long avenue, which was to her the bleſſed ſignal of tranſient liberty.

Her dreſs, the expence of which Mrs. Rayland very graciouſly took upon herſelf,

was ſuch as indicated to all who ſaw her, at once the charity and prudence of her patroneſs, who repeatedly told her viſitors, that ſhe had taken the orphan niece of her old ſervant Lennard, not with any view of making her a gentlewoman, but to bring her up to get her bread honeſtly; and therefore ſhe had directed her to be dreſſed, not in gauzes and flounces, like the flirting girls ſhe ſaw ſo tawdry at church, but in a plain ſtuff; not flaring without a cap, which ſhe thought monſtrouſly indecent for a female at any age, but in a plain cap, and a clean white apron, that ſhe might never be encouraged to vanity by any kind of finery that did not become her ſituation.—Monimia, though dreſſed like a pariſh girl, or in a way very little ſuperior, was obſerved by the viſitors who happened to ſee her, and to whom this harangue was made, to be ſo very pretty, that nothing could conceal or diminiſh her beauty. Her dark ſtuff gown gave new luſtre to her lovely complexion; and her thick muſlin cap could not

not confine her luxuriant dark hair. Her ſhape was ſymmetry itſelf, and her motions ſo graceful, that it was impoſſible to behold her even attached to her humble employment at the wheel, without acknowledging that no art could give what nature had beſtowed upon her.

Orlando, who had loved her as a playfellow while they were both children, now began to feel a more tender and more reſpectful affection for her; though unconſcious himſelf that it was her beauty that awakened theſe ſentiments. On the laſt of his holidays, before he entirely left ſchool, the vigilance of Mrs. Lennard was redoubled, and ſhe ſo contrived to confine Monimia, that their romping was at an end, and they hardly ever ſaw each other, except by mere chance, at a diſtance, or now and then at dinner, when Monimia was ſuffered to dine at table; an honour which ſhe was not always allowed, but which Mrs. Lennard cautiouſly avoided entirely ſuſpending when Orlando was at the Hall, as there was no-

thing ſhe ſeemed to dread ſo much as alarming Mrs. Rayland with any idea of Orlando's noticing her niece. This however never happened at that time to occur to the old lady; not only becauſe Mrs. Lennard took ſuch pains to lead her imagination from any ſuch probability, but becauſe ſhe conſidered them both as mere children, and Monimia as a ſervant.

It was however at this time that a trifling incident had nearly awakened ſuch ſuſpicions, and occaſioned ſuch diſpleaſure, as it would have been very difficult to have ſubdued or appeaſed. Mrs. Rayland had been long confined by a fit of the gout; and the warm weather of Whitſuntide had only juſt enabled her to walk, leaning on a crutch on one ſide, and on Mrs. Lennard on the other, in a long gallery which reached the whole length of the ſouth wing, and which was hung with a great number of family pictures.—Mrs. Rayland had peculiar ſatis-

faction

faction in relating the hiſtory of the heroes and dames of her family, who were repreſented by theſe portraits.—Sir Roger De Coverley never went over the account of his anceſtors with more correctneſs or more delight. Indeed, the reflections of Mrs. Rayland were uninterrupted by any of thoſe little blemiſhes in the hiſtory of her progenitors, that a little bewildered the good knight; for ſhe boaſted that not one of the Rayland family had ever ſtooped to degrade himſelf by trade; and that the marriage of Mrs. Somerive, her aunt, was the only inſtance in which a daughter of the Raylands had ſtooped to an inferior alliance.—The little withered figure, bent down with age and infirmity, and the laſt of a race which ſhe was thus arrogantly boaſting—a race, which in a few years, perhaps a few months, might be no more remembered—was a ridiculous inſtance of human folly and human vanity, at which Lennard had ſenſe enough to ſmile internally, while ſhe affected to liſten with inte-

reſt to ſtories which ſhe had heard repeated for near forty years. It was in the midſt of her attention to an anecdote which generally cloſed the relation, of a ſpeech made by Queen Anne to the laſt Lady Rayland on her having no ſon, that a ſudden and violent bounce towards the middle of the gallery occaſioned an interruption of the ſtory, and equal amazement in the lady and her confidante; who both turning round, not very nimbly indeed, demanded of Monimia, who had been ſitting in one of the old-faſhioned bow-windows of which the caſement was open, what was the matter?

Monimia, covered with bluſhes, and in a ſort of ſcuffle to conceal ſomething with her feet, replied, heſitating and trembling, that ſhe did not know.

Mrs. Lennard, who probably gueſſed the truth, declared loudly that ſhe would immediately find out.—But it was not the work of a moment to ſeat her lady ſafely on one of the leathern ſettees, while ſhe herſelf haſtened to the window to diſcover,

if poſſible, who had from the court below thrown in the ſomething that had thus alarmed them. Before ſhe reached the window, therefore, the court was clear; and Monimia had recovered her confuſion, and went on with her work.

Mrs. Lennard now thought proper to give another turn to the incident. She ſaid, it muſt have been ſome accidental noiſe from the wainſcot's cracking in dry weather —"though I could have ſworn at the moment," cried ſhe, "that ſomething very hard, like a ſtone or a ſtick, had been thrown into the room. However, to be ſure, I muſt have been miſtaken, for certainly there is nobody in the court: and really one does recollect hearing in this gallery very odd noiſes, which, if one was ſuperſtitious, might ſometimes make one uneaſy.--Many of the neighbours ſome years ago uſed to ſay to me, that they wondered I was not afraid of croſſing it of a night by myſelf, when you, Ma'am, uſed to ſleep in the worked bed-chamber, and I lay over the houſe-keeper's room. But I uſed to ſay, that you had ſuch

an underſtanding, that I ſhould offend you by ſhewing any fooliſh fears; and that all the noble family that owned this houſe time out of mind, were ſuch honourable perſons, that none of them could be ſuppoſed likely to walk after their deceaſe, as the ſpirits of wicked perſons are ſaid to do. But, however, they uſed to anſwer in reply to that, that ſome of your anceſtors, Ma'am, had hid great ſums of money and valuable jewels in this houſe, to ſave it from the wicked rebels in the time of the bleſſed Martyr; and that it was to reveal theſe treaſures that the appearances of ſpirits had been ſeen, and ſtrange noiſes heard about the houſe."

This ſpeech was ſo exactly calculated to pleaſe the lady to whom it was addreſſed, that it almoſt obliterated the recollection of the little alarm ſhe had felt, and blunted the ſpirit of enquiry, which the twinges of the gout alſo contributed to diminiſh; and fortunately the arrival of the apothecary, who was that moment announced, and whoſe

viſits

viſits were always a matter of importance, left her no longer any time to interrogate Monimia. But Mrs. Lennard, having led her down to her great chair, and ſeen her ſafely in conference with her phyſical friend, returned haſtily to the gallery, where Monimia ſtill remained demurely at work; and peremptorily inſiſted on knowing what it was that had bounced into the room, and ſtruck againſt the picture of Sir Hildebrand himſelf; who in armour, and on a white horſe whoſe flanks were overſhadowed by his ſtupendous wig, pranced over the great gilt chimney-piece, juſt as he appeared at the head of a county aſſociation in 1707.

Monimia was a poor diſſembler, and had never in her life been guilty of a falſehood. She was as little capable of diſguiſing as of denying the truth; and the menaces of her aunt frightened her into an immediate confeſſion, that it was Mr. Orlando, who, paſſing through the court to go to cricket in the park, had ſeen her ſitting at the window, and, "not thinking any harm," had

had thrown up his ball "only in play," to make her jump; but that it had unluckily gone through the window, and hit againſt the picture.

"And what became of it afterwards?" angrily demanded Mrs. Lennard.

"It bounded," anſwered the innocent culprit, "it bounded acroſs the floor, and I rolled it away with my feet, under the chairs."

"And how dared you," exclaimed the aunt, "how dared you, artful little huſſey, conceal the truth from me? how dared you encourage any ſuch abominable doings? —A pretty thing indeed to have happen! —Suppoſe the good-for-nothing boy had hit my lady or me upon the head or breaſt, as it was a mercy he did not!—there would have been a fine ſtory!—Or ſuppoſe he had broke the windows, ſhattered the panes, and cut us with the glaſs!—Or what if he had beat the ſtained glaſs of my lady's coat of arms, up at top there, all to ſmaſh—

what d'ye think would have become of you, you worthleſs little puſs! what puniſhment would have been bad enough for you?"

"My dear aunt," ſaid the weeping Monimia, "how could I help it? I am ſure I did not know what Mr. Orlando was going to do; I ſaw him but a moment before; and you know that, if I *had* known he intended to throw the ball up, I dared not have ſpoken to him to have prevented it."

"Have ſpoken to him, indeed!—No, I think not; and remember this, girl, that you have come off well this time, and I ſhan't ſay any thing of the matter to my lady: but if I ever catch you ſpeaking to that wicked boy, or even daring to look at him, I will turn you out of doors that moment—and let this teach you that I am in earneſt." Having thus ſaid, ſhe gave the terrified trembling girl a violent blow, or what was in her language a good box on the ear, which forcing her head againſt the ſtone window-frame almoſt ſtunned her;

ſhe

ſhe then repeated it on the lovely neck of her victim, where the marks of her fingers were to be traced many days afterwards; and then flounced out of the room, and, compoſing herſelf, went down to give her ſhare of information, as to her lady's complaint, to the apothecary.

The unhappy Monimia, who had felt ever ſince her earlieſt recollection the miſery of her ſituation, was never ſo ſenſible of it as at this moment. The work fell from her hands—ſhe laid her head on a marble ſlab, that was on one ſide of the bow window, and gave way to an agony of grief.—Her cap had fallen from her head, and her fine hair concealed her face, which reſting on her arms was bathed in tears.—Sobs, that ſeemed to rend her heart, were the only expreſſion of ſorrow ſhe was able to utter; ſhe heard, ſhe ſaw nothing—but was ſuddenly ſtartled by ſomething touching her hand as it hung lifeleſsly over the table. She looked up—and beheld, with mingled emotions of ſurpriſe and fear, Orlando.

lando Somerive; who with tears in his eyes, and in a faltering whiſper, conjured her to tell him what was the matter.—The threat ſo recently uttered yet vibrated in her ears—and her terror, leſt her aunt ſhould return and find Orlando there, was ſo great, that, without knowing what ſhe did, ſhe ſtarted up and ran towards the door; from whence ſhe would have fled, diſordered as ſhe was, down ſtairs, and through the very room where Mrs. Rayland, her aunt, and the apothecary were in conference, if Orlando with ſuperior ſtrength and agility had not thrown himſelf before her, and, ſetting his back againſt the door, inſiſted upon knowing the cauſe of her tears before he ſuffered her to ſtir.

Gaſping for breath, trembling and inarticulately ſhe tried to relate the effects of his indiſcretion, and that therefore her aunt had threatened and ſtruck her. Orlando, whoſe temper was naturally warm, and whoſe generous ſpirit revolted from every kind of injuſtice, felt at once his indigna-

tion

tion excited by this act of oppreſſion, and his anger that Mrs. Lennard ſhould arraign him for a childiſh frolic, and thence take occaſion ſo unworthily to treat an innocent girl; and being too raſh to reflect on conſequences, he declared that he would go inſtantly into the parlour, confeſs to Mrs. Rayland what he had done, and appeal againſt the tyranny and cruelty of her woman.

It was now the turn of poor Monimia to entreat and implore; and ſhe threw herſelf half frantic on her knees before him, and beſought him rather to kill her, than to expoſe her to the terrors and diſtreſs ſuch a ſtep would inevitably plunge her into.—"Indeed, dear Orlando," cried ſhe, "you would not be heard againſt my aunt. Mrs. Rayland, if ſhe forgave you, would never forgive me; but I ſhould be immediately turned out of the houſe with diſgrace; and I have no friend, no relation in the world but my aunt, and muſt beg my bread. But it is not ſo much that," added ſhe, while ſobs broke her utterance, "it is not ſo much

much *that* I care for—*I* am ſo unfortunate that it does not ſignify what becomes of me: I can work in the fields, or can go through any hardſhip; but Mrs. Rayland will be very angry with you, and will not ſuffer you to come to the Hall again, and I ſhall never—never ſee you any more!"

This ſpeech, unguarded and ſimple as it was, had more effect on Orlando than the moſt ſtudied eloquence. He took the weeping, trembling Monimia up in his arms, ſeated her in a chair; and drying her eyes, he beſought her to be comforted, and to aſſure herſelf, that whatever he might feel, he would do nothing that ſhould give her pain.—"Oh! go then, for Heaven's ſake go from hence inſtantly!" replied Monimia.—"If my aunt ſhould come to look for me, as it is very likely ſhe will, we ſhould be both undone!"

"Good God!" exclaimed Orlando, "why ſhould it be ſo?—Why are we never to meet? and what harm to any one is done by my friendſhip for you, Monimia?"

"Alas!"

"Alas!" anſwered ſhe, every moment more and more apprehenſive of the arrival of her aunt, "alas! Orlando, I know not, I am ſure it was once, before my aunt was ſo enraged at it, all the comfort I had in the world; but now it is my greateſt miſery, becauſe I dare not even look at you when I happen to meet you.—Yet I am ſure I mean no hurt to any body; nor can it do my cruel aunt any harm, that you pity a poor orphan who has no friend upon earth."

"*I will*, however," replied he warmly, "pity and love you too—love you as well as I do any of my ſiſters—even the ſiſter I love beſt—and I ſhould hate myſelf if I did not. But, dear Monimia, tell me, if I cannot ſee you in the day-time, is it impoſſible for you to walk out of an evening, when theſe old women are in bed?—When I am not at the Hall they would ſuſpect nothing; and I ſhould not mind walking from home, after our people are in bed, to meet you for half an hour any where about theſe grounds."

Ignorant of the decorum required by the world,

world, and innocent, even to infantine ſimplicity, as Monimia was, at the age of ſomething more than fourteen ſhe had that natural rectitude of underſtanding, that at once told her theſe clandeſtine meetings would be wrong. "Ah no, Mr. Orlando," ſaid ſhe ſighing, "that muſt not be; for if it ſhould be known——"

"It cannot, it ſhall not be known," cried he, eagerly interrupting her.

"But it is impoſſible, my good friend, if it were not wrong; for you remember that to-day is Saturday, and your ſchool begins on Monday."

"Curſe on the ſchool! I had indeed forgot it.—Well, but promiſe me then, Monimia, promiſe me that you will make yourſelf eaſy now; and that when I come from ſchool entirely, which I ſhall do at Chriſtmas, we ſhall contrive to meet ſometimes, and to read together, as we uſed to do, the Fairy Tales and the Arabian Nights laſt year, and the year before.—Will you promiſe me, Monimia?"

Monimia,

Monimia, whoſe apprehenſions every moment increaſed, and who even fancied ſhe heard the ruſtle of Mrs. Lennard's gown upon the private ſtair-caſe that led down from the gallery, was ready to promiſe any thing. —"Oh! yes, yes, Orlando!—I promiſe—do but go now, and we ſhall not perhaps be ſo unhappy: my aunt may not be ſo very ill-humoured when you come home again."

"And ſay you will not cry any more now."

"I will not, indeed I will not—but for God's ſake go!—I'm ſure I hear ſomebody."

"There is nobody, indeed; but I will go to make you eaſy."—He then, trembling as much as ſhe did, haſtily kiſſed the hand he held; and gliding on tip-toe to the other end of the gallery, went through the apartments that led down the great ſtair-caſe, and taking a circuit round another part of the houſe, entered the room where Mrs. Rayland was ſitting, as if he had been juſt come from cricket in the park.

He

He had not left the gallery a moment before Mrs. Lennard came to look for Monimia, whom ſhe found in greater agitation than ſhe had left her, and ſtill drowned in tears. She again began in the ſevereſt terms to reprove her; and as the ſobs and ſighs of the ſuffering girl deprived her of the power of anſwering her invectives, ſhe violently ſeized her arm; and, dragging rather than leading her to her own room, ſhe bade her inſtantly undreſs and go to bed—"that you may not," ſaid ſhe, "expoſe your odious blubbered face."

Poor Monimia was extremely willing to obey.—She ſat down and began to undreſs, liſtening as patiently as ſhe could to the violent ſcolding which her indefatigable aunt ſtill kept up againſt her; who having at length exhauſted her breath, bounced out and locked the door.

Monimia, then left alone, again began to indulge her tears; but her room was in a turret

turret over a ſort of lumber-room, where the game-keeper kept his nets and his rods, and where Orlando uſed to depoſit his bow, his cricket-bats, and other inſtruments of ſport, with which he was indulged with playing in the park. She now heard him come in, with one of the ſervants; for ſuch an effect had his voice, that ſhe could diſtinguiſh it amid a thouſand others, and when it did not ſeem to be audible to any one elſe.—Though ſhe could not now diſtinguiſh the words, ſhe heard him diſcourſing as if he ſeemed to be bidding the place farewell for that time. She got upon a chair (for the long narrow window was ſo far from the ground, that ſhe could not ſee through it as ſhe ſtood); and ſhe perceived Orlando croſs the park on foot, and ſlowly and reluctantly walk towards that part of it that was next to his father's houſe. She continued to look at him till a wood, through which he had to paſs, concealed him from her view. She then retired to her

her bed, and ſhed tears. Orlando left his home the next day, for his laſt half year at the ſchool (having that evening taken leave of Mrs. Rayland); and it was ſix months before Monimia ſaw him again.

CHAP. III.

HOWEVER trifling the incident was that is related in the foregoing chapter, it ſo much alarmed the prudent ſagacity of Mrs. Lennard, that when on the following Chriſtmas Mr. Orlando returned to his occaſional viſits at the Hall, ſhe took more care than before to prevent any poſſibility of his ever having an opportunity of meeting Monimia alone; and, as much as ſhe could without being remarked by her lady, from ſeeing her at all. But while ſhe took theſe precautions, ſhe began to think them uſeleſs. Orlando was no longer the giddy boy, eager at his childiſh ſports, and watching with impatience for a game of blindman's buff in the ſervants' hall, or a romp with any one who would play with him.

him. Orlando was a young man as uncommonly grave, as he was tall and handſome. There was ſomething more than gravity, there was dejection in his manner; but it ſerved only to make him more intereſting. He now ſlept oftener than before at the Hall, but he was ſeen there leſs; and paſſed whole days in his own room, or rather in the library; where, as this quiet and ſtudious temper recommended him more than ever to Mrs. Rayland, ſhe allowed him to have a fire, to the great comfort and benefit of the books, which had been without that advantage for many years.

Mrs. Lennard, who now beheld him with peculiar favour, though ſhe had formerly done him ill offices, ſeemed willing to oblige him in every thing but in allowing him ever to converſe with her niece, who was ſeldom ſuffered to appear in the parlour, but was kept to work in her own room. Mrs. Rayland's increaſing infirmities, though not ſuch as threatened her life, threw the management of every thing

about her more immediately into the hands of Mrs. Lennard; and, occupied by the care of her own health, Mrs. Rayland's attention to what was paſſing around her was leſs every day, and the imbecility of age hourly more perceptible. She therefore made no remark on this change of ſyſtem; but if ſhe happened to want Monimia, or, as ſhe choſe to call her, Mary, ſhe ſent for her, and diſmiſſed her when her ſervice was performed, without any farther enquiry as to how ſhe afterwards paſſed her time.

Orlando, however, though he had, ſince his laſt return, never ſpoken a word to Monimia, and though, in their few and ſhort meetings, the preſence of Mrs. Lennard prevented their exchanging even a look, was no longer at a loſs to diſcriminate thoſe ſentiments which he felt for the beautiful orphan, whoſe charms, which had made almoſt in infancy an impreſſion on his heart, were now opening to a perfection even beyond their early promiſe. Her impriſonment,

ment, the harſhneſs of her aunt towards her, and her deſolate ſituation, contributed to raiſe in his heart all that the moſt tender pity could add to the ardency of a firſt paſſion. Naturally of a warm and ſanguine temper, the ſort of reading he had lately purſued, his ſituation, his very name, all added ſomething to the romantic enthuſiaſm of his character; but in the midſt of the fairy dreams which he indulged, reaſon too often ſtepped in to poiſon his enjoyments, and repreſented to him, that he was without fortune and without poſſeſſion—that far from ſeeing at preſent any probability of ever being able to offer an eſtabliſhment to the unfortunate Monimia, he had to procure one for himſelf. It was now he firſt felt an earneſt wiſh, that the hopes his relations had ſometimes encouraged might be realized, and that ſome part of the great wealth of the Rayland family might be his: but with this he had no new reaſon to flatter himſelf; for Mrs. Rayland, though ſhe ſeemed to become every day

more fond of his company, never took any notice of the neceſſity there was, that now in his nineteenth year he ſhould fix upon ſome plan for his future eſtabliſhment in the world.

This neceſſity however lay heavy on the heart of his father, who had long felt with anguiſh, that the miſconduct of his eldeſt ſon had rendered it impoſſible for him to do juſtice to his younger. With a ſmall income and a large family, he had never, though he lived as economically as poſſible, been able to lay by much money; and what he had ſaved, in the hope of accumulating ſmall fortunes for his daughters, had been paid away for his eldeſt ſon in the firſt two years of his reſidence at Oxford; the third had nearly devoured the five hundred pounds legacy given to the family by the elder Mrs. Rayland; and the firſt half-year after he left the univerſity, and which he paſſed between London and his father's houſe, entirely exhauſted that reſource; while Mr. Somerive in vain repreſented to him,

him, that, in continuing ſuch a career, he muſt ſee the eſtate mortgaged, which was the ſole dependence of his family now, and *his* ſole dependence hereafter.

So deep, and often ſo fatal, are early impreſſions in minds where reaſon ſlowly and feebly combats the influence of paſſion, that though nothing was more certain than that Mrs. Rayland's fortune was entirely at her own diſpoſal, and nothing more evident than her diſlike to him, he never could be perſuaded that, as he was the heir at law, he ſhould not poſſeſs the greater part of the eſtate; and he was accuſtomed, in his orgies among his companions, to drink "to their propitious meeting at the Hall, when the old girl ſhould be in Abraham's boſom," and not unfrequently "to her ſpeedy departure." He ſettled with himſelf the alterations he ſhould make, and the ſtud he ſhould collect; propoſed to refit in an excellent ſtyle the old kennel, and to reſtore to Rayland Hall the praiſe it had formerly boaſted, of having the beſt pack of fox-

hounds within three counties. When it was repreſented that the poſſibility of executing theſe plans was very uncertain, ſince the old lady certainly preferred Orlando, he anſwered—" Oh! damn it, that's not what I'm afraid of—No, no; the old hag has been, thanks to my fortunate ſtars, brought up in good old-faſhioned notions, and knows that the firſt-born ſon is in all Chriſtian countries the head of the houſe, and that the reſt muſt ſcramble through the world as well as they can—As for my ſolemn brother, you ſee nature and fortune have deſigned him for a parſon. The tabby may like him for a chaplain, and means to qualify him by one of her livings for the petticoats; but take my word for it, that however ſhe may ſet her weazen face againſt it, juſt to impoſe upon the world, ſhe likes at the bottom of her heart a young fellow of ſpirit—and you'll ſee me maſter of the Hall. Egad, how I'll make her old hoards ſpin again! Down go thoſe woods that are now every year the worſe for ſtanding.

ing. Whenever I hear ſhe's fairly off, the ſquirrels will have notice to quit."

It was in vain that the mild and paternal arguments of Mr. Somerive himſelf, or the tears and tender remonſtrances of his wife, were employed, whenever their ſon would give them an opportunity, to counteract this unfortunate prepoſſeſſion. He by degrees began to abſent himſelf more and more from home; and when he was there, his hours were ſuch as put any converſation on ſerious topics out of their power. He was never indeed ſullen, for that was not his diſpoſition; but he was ſo thoughtleſs, ſo volatile, and ſo prepoſſeſſed that he had a right to do as other young men did with whom he had been accuſtomed to aſſociate, that his father gave up as hopeleſs every attempt to bring him to his ſenſes.

The greater the uneaſineſs to which Mr. Somerive was thus ſubject by the conduct of his eldeſt ſon, the more ſolicitous he became for the future eſtabliſhment of the younger. But he knew not how to proceed

to obtain it. He had now no longer the means of ſending him to the univerſity, of which he had ſometimes thought, in the hope that Mrs. Rayland might, if he were qualified for orders, give him one of the livings of which ſhe was patroneſs; nor could he, exhauſted as his ſavings were by the indiſcretion of his eldeſt ſon, command money enough to purchaſe him a commiſſion, which he once intended. Sometimes he fancied that, if he were to apply to Mrs. Rayland, ſhe would aſſiſt in ſecuring an eſtabliſhment in future for one about whom ſhe appeared ſo much intereſted at preſent; but he oftener apprehended, from the oddity and caprice of her temper, that any attempt to procure more certain and permanent favours for Orlando, might occaſion her to deprive him of what he now poſſeſſed.

Mrs. Somerive, though a woman of an excellent underſtanding, had contracted ſuch an awe of the old lady, that ſhe was poſitively againſt ſpeaking to her about her

ſon;

ſon; while maternal partiality, which was indeed well juſtified by the good qualities and handſome perſon of her ſon, continually ſuggeſted to her that Mrs. Rayland's prepoſſeſſion in his favour, if left to take its courſe, would finally make him the heir of at leaſt great part of her property.

Thus his father, from uncertainty how to act for the beſt, ſuffered weeks and months to paſs away, in which he could not determine to act at all; and as more than half thoſe weeks and months were paſſed at the Hall, his mother fondly flattered herſelf, that he was making rapid advances in ſecuring to his family the poſſeſſions they had ſo good a claim to.

Neither of them ſaw the danger to which they expoſed him, of loſing himſelf in an imprudent and even fatal attachment to a young woman, while they ſuppoſed him wholly given up to acquire the favour of an old one; for in fact Mrs. Lennard had ſo artfully kept her niece out of ſight, that neither of them knew her—they barely

knew that there was a young perſon in the houſe who was conſidered in the light of a ſervant; but whether ſhe was well or ill looking, it had never occurred to them to enquire, becauſe they never ſuppoſed her more acquainted with their ſon than any other of the female domeſtics.

Poor Orlando, however, was cheriſhing a paſſion, which had taken entire poſſeſſion of his heart before he was conſcious that he had one, and which the reſtraints that every way ſurrounded him ſerved only to inflame. Monimia now appeared in his eyes, what ſhe really was, infinitely more lovely than ever. She was on his account a priſoner, for he learned that when he was not in the country ſhe was allowed more liberty. She was friendleſs, and harſhly treated; and, with a form and face that he thought would do honour to the higheſt rank of ſociety, ſhe ſeemed to be condemned to perpetual ſervitude, and he feared to perpetual ignorance; for he knew that Mrs. Rayland had, with the abſurd prejudice of narrow minds,

declared

declared againſt her being taught any thing but the plaineſt domeſtic duties, and the plaineſt work. She had however taught herſelf, with very little aid from her aunt, to read; and lately, ſince ſhe had been ſo much alone, ſhe had tried to write; but ſhe had not always materials, and was frequently compelled to hide thoſe ſhe contrived to obtain: ſo that her progreſs in this was ſlow, and made only by ſnatches, as the ill humour of her aunt allowed or forbade her to make theſe laudable attempts at improvement.

Her apartment was ſtill in the turret that terminated one wing of the houſe, and Orlando had been at the Hall the greater part of a fortnight, without their having exchanged a ſingle word. They had indeed met only twice by mere accident, in the preſence of the lady of the manſion and of Mrs. Lennard; once when ſhe croſſed the hall when he was leading the lady to her chair out of the gallery; and a ſecond time when ſhe was ſent for, on an acceſſion

of

of gout, to aſſiſt in adjuſting the flannels and cuſhions, which Mrs. Rayland declared ſhe managed better than any body.

As ſhe knelt to perform this operation, Orlando, who was reading a practical diſcourſe on faith in oppoſition to good works, was ſurpriſed by her beautiful figure in her ſimple ſtuff gown, which had ſuch an effect on his imagination that he no longer knew what he was reading: but, after half a dozen blunders in leſs than half a dozen lines, he became ſo conſcious of his confuſion that he could not proceed at all, but, affecting to be ſeized with a violent cough, got up and went out. Again, however, this ſymptom eſcaped Mrs. Rayland, who, tho' ſhe read good books as a matter of form, and to impreſs people with an idea of her piety and underſtanding, cared very little about their purport, and was juſt then more occupied with the care of her foot than with abſtract reaſonings on the efficacy of faith.

In

In the mean time Monimia, who bluſhed if ſhe even beheld the ſhadow of Orlando at a diſtance, and whoſe heart beat at the ſound of his voice, as if it would eſcape from her boſom, had never an opportunity of hearing it, unleſs he accidentally ſpoke to ſome perſon in the room under hers, where ſhe knew he often went, and particularly at this ſeaſon, which was near the end of February, when the ponds were drawn, and the nets and poles in frequent uſe: but the door by which this room opened to the court was on the other ſide. Monimia had only one high long window in a very thick wall, that looked into the park: whenever therefore, as ſhe ſat alone in her turret, ſhe heard any perſon in the room beneath her, ſhe liſtened with an anxious and palpitating heart, and at length fancied that ſhe could diſtinguiſh the ſtep of Orlando from that of the game-keeper or any of the other ſervants.

If ſhe was thus attentive to him, without any other motive than to enjoy the pleaſure

of

of fancying he was near her, Orlando was on his ſide ſtudying how to obtain an opportunity of ſeeing her; not in the intention of communicating to her thoſe ſentiments which he now too well underſtood, but in the hope of finding means to make her amends for the injuſtice of fortune. If there was any dependence to be placed on expreſſion of countenance, the animation and intelligence that were viſible in the ſoft features of Monimia promiſed an excellent underſtanding. What pity that it ſhould not be cultivated! What delight to be her preceptor, and, in deſpite of the malignity of fortune, to render her mind as lovely as her form! This project got ſo entirely the poſſeſſion of Orlando's imagination, that he thought, he dreamed, of nothing elſe; and, however difficult, or even impracticable it ſeemed, he determined to undertake it.

Mrs. Lennard ſlept at ſome diſtance; but there was no other way of Monimia's going into any part of the houſe but by a paſſage which

which led through her room; for every other avenue was closed up, and the last thing she did every night was to lock the door of the room where her niece lay, and to take away the key.

The window was equally well secured, for it was in effect only a loop; and of this, narrow as it was, the small square of the casement that opened was secured by iron bars. The Raylands had been eminent royalists in the civil wars, and Rayland Hall had held out against a party of Fairfax's army that had closely besieged it. Great part of the house retained the same appearance of defensive strength which had then been given it; and no knight of romance ever had so many real difficulties to encounter in achieving the deliverance of his princess, as Orlando had in finding the means merely to converse with the little imprisoned orphan. Months passed away, in which his most watchful diligence served only to prove that these difficulties were almost insurmountable; nor would he perhaps, with

all the enthuſiaſm of love and romance, have ever conquered them, if chance had not befriended him.

Mrs. Rayland had given him, under reſtrictions that he ſhould uſe it only while he was at the Hall, a very fine colt, which was of a breed of racers, the property of the Raylands, and very eminent in the days of Sir Hildebrand. Out of reſpect to its ancient proweſs, the breed was ſtill kept up, though the deſcendants no longer emulated the honours of their progenitors on the turf: but the produce was generally ſold by the coachman, who had the management of the ſtable, and who was ſuppoſed to have profited very conſiderably by his dealings.

Orlando, highly gratified by this mark of Mrs. Rayland's favour, undertook to break the young horſe himſelf, and to give it among other accompliſhments that of leaping. There was no leaping-bar about the grounds; but in the lumber-room on the ground floor of one of the turrets he had

ſeen

ſeen the timber of one that had formerly ſtood in the park. To this place, therefore, he repaired; and in removing the large poſts, which were very little injured by time, ſome other ſlabs of wood, boards, and pieces of ſcaffolding were moved alſo, and Orlando ſaw that they had concealed a door, formerly boarded up, but of which the boards were now broken and decayed: he forced away a piece of the rotten wood, and ſaw a flight of broken ſtone ſteps, juſt wide enough to admit one perſon with difficulty. His heart bounded with tranſport: he knew that this ſtair-caſe muſt lead to the top of the turret, and conſequently wind round the room occupied by Monimia, which it was probable had a communication alſo with the ſtairs. But, unable to determine in a moment how he ſhould avail himſelf, or acquaint her, of this fortunate diſcovery, and trembling leſt it ſhould be known, and his hopes at once deſtroyed, he haſtily replaced the ſpars of wood that had concealed the door, before the

the return of the gardener and the under game-keeper, who had been aſſiſting him in his operations about the leaping-bar; and haſtily following them to the ſpot where they were putting it up, he affected to be intereſted in its completion, while his mind was really occupied only by plans for ſeeing without fear of diſcovery his adored Monimia.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

LOVE rendered Orlando ſo politic, that he determined rather to defer the happineſs he hoped for, in gaining unmoleſted acceſs to Monimia for two or three days, than to riſk by precipitancy the delightful ſecret of the concealed door, and to watch the motion of the dragon whoſe unwearied vigilance might at once render it uſeleſs. He therefore ſet himſelf to obſerve the hours when Mrs. Lennard was moſt certainly engaged about her miſtreſs; and he found, that as ſhe indulged very freely in the pleaſures of a good table, of which ſhe was herſelf directreſs, ſhe became frequently unwilling to encounter much exertion after dinner; and generally left Monimia (who either did not dine below, or retired with the table-cloth) unmoleſted

leſted till ſix o'clock, when, if he was not there, ſhe was called down to make tea.

Theſe hours therefore ſeemed moſt propitious for the experiment he muſt of neceſſity make, which was to aſcend the ſtaircaſe, and ſeek for the door that probably, though now blocked up, had originally led from it into the room inhabited by Monimia; from whence, as it was perhaps only boarded up, he hoped to make her hear, and to prevail upon her to aſſiſt in forcing a paſſage through it.

He knew Mrs. Lennard was leſs upon the *qui vive?* when he was not about the houſe; and therefore, the evening before that when he intended to put his project in execution, he took leave of Mrs. Rayland, and told her that he was going home for a few days, when with her permiſſion he would return. Mrs. Rayland, who now thought the houſe melancholy without him, bade him come back to the Hall as ſoon as he could, which he promiſed with a beating heart, and departed.

The next day, however, having taken the precaution to get a letter of compliment from his father to Mrs. Rayland, the better to account for his quick return, if to account for it ſhould be neceſſary, he ſet out on foot after dinner; and as he arrived at Rayland Hall juſt as the ſervants of that family were eating theirs, which was always a long and momentous buſineſs, he had the good fortune not to meet any one, but to enter the lower room of the turret; and as he had often the key, he now locked the door, and liſtening very attentively heard Monimia walking above, and convinced himſelf that ſhe was alone.

As ſilently as he could he removed the planks and timber that concealed the door; and having ſo placed them that, without diſcovering the aperture, they leaned ſo hollow from the wall that he could get under them, he tore away the remaining impediments that obſtructed him, and entered the low ſtair-caſe, of which about fourteen broken and decayed ſteps led, as he expected,

pected, to another door which was alſo boarded up, and then wound up to the top of the turret. He ſtopped a moment and liſtened; he diſtinctly heard Monimia ſigh deeply, and open a drawer. He conſidered a moment what way of accoſting her would be leaſt likely to alarm her too ſuddenly, and at length he determined to ſpeak.

After another pauſe, and finding all was ſilent in her room, he tapped ſoftly againſt the boarded door; and lowering his voice he called, "Monimia, Monimia!"

The affrighted girl exclaimed, "Good God! who is there? who ſpeaks?" "Be not affrighted," replied he, ſpeaking louder, "it is Orlando." "Orlando! and from whence, dear ſir, do you ſpeak?" "I know not, for I cannot tell what part of your room this door opens to; tell me, where do you hear the ſound I now make?" "Againſt the head of my bed." "Cannot you then remove the bed, and ſee if there is not a door?" "I can," replied Monimia, "if my trembling does not prevent

vent me, for my bed goes upon caſters; but indeed I tremble ſo! if my aunt ſhould come!" "She will not come," replied Orlando impatiently: "do not give way to groundleſs fears, Monimia; but, if ever you had any friendſhip for me, exert yourſelf now, to procure the only opportunity we ſhall ever have of meeting—remove your bed, and ſee what is behind it."

Monimia, trembling and amazed as ſhe was, found in the midſt of her alarm a ſenſation of joy that was undeſcribable. It lent her ſtrength to remove the bed, which it was not difficult to do; but the room was hung with old-faſhioned glazed linen, when many years before it had been fitted up as a bed-chamber: this kind of arras entirely hid the door. "Ah!" cried Monimia, "there is no door, Mr. Orlando. The hangings are juſt the ſame here as about the reſt of the room." "Cut them," cried he, "with your ſciſſars, and you will find there is a door." "But if my aunt ſhould diſcover that they are cut?" "Oh heavens,"

exclaimed Orlando, "if you are thus apprehenſive, Monimia, we ſhall never meet; but if you have any regard for me"—— The adjuration was too powerful: Monimia forgot the dread of her aunt in the ſuperior dread of offending Orlando. She took her ſciſſars, and, cutting the hangings, which through time were little more than tinder, diſcovered the door, which was very thin, and only nailed up, ſtrengthened on the outſide by a few ſlight deals acroſs it. Orlando, who, like another Pyramus, watched with a beating heart the breach through which he now ſaw the light, forced away theſe ſlight barriers with very little difficulty; and then, ſetting his foot againſt the door, it gave way, and the remnant of tattered hanging made no reſiſtance. He found himſelf in the room with Monimia, who from mingled emotions of pleaſure and fear could hardly breathe. "At length," cried he, "I have found you, Monimia! at length I have got to you." "But we ſhall both be utterly ruined," interrupted ſhe, "if

"if my aunt ſhould happen to come: ſpeak low, for heaven's ſake, ſpeak low. I ſhould die upon the ſpot, if ſhe ſhould happen to find you here."

"Let us conſider," ſaid Orlando, "how we may meet for the future. I do not mean to ſtay now; but you ſee this door gives us always an opportunity of ſeeing each other." "But how ſhall I dare?" cried the trembling Monimia: "my aunt watches me ſo narrowly, that I am never ſecure of being alone a moment: even now, perhaps, ſhe may be coming."

So great was the terror which this idea impreſſed on the timid Monimia, that Orlando ſaw there was no time to be loſt in ſettling their more ſecure meetings. "Have you," ſaid he, "have you, Monimia, courage enough to make uſe of this door, to come down into the ſtudy to me when we are ſure all the houſe is quiet? You know there is a paſſage to that end of the houſe, without croſſing either of the courts or any of the apartments, by going through the

old chapel, and nobody can hear you. I only propoſe this, becauſe I ſuppoſe you are afraid of letting me come up here."

"Oh! either is very wrong," replied ſhe, "and I ſhall be ſadly blamed."

"Well, then, Monimia, I am deceived, cruelly deceived. I did believe that you had ſome regard for me, and I proteſt to heaven that I mean nothing but the pureſt friendſhip towards you. I want you to read, which I know you have now no opportunity of doing. I would find proper books for you; for you may one day have occaſion for more knowledge than you can acquire in the way in which you now live. Perhaps clandeſtine meetings might not be right in any other caſe; but, perſecuted as you are, Monimia, we muſt meet clandeſtinely, or not meet at all. Alas! my dear friend, it may not be long that I may be here to aſk this favour of you, or to requeſt you to oblige me for your own good. My father is conſidering how to ſettle me in life."

"To

"To ſettle you!" ſaid Monimia, faintly.

"Yes—I mean, to put me into ſome profeſſion in the world; and whatever it is, it will of courſe carry me quite away from hence. As ſoon as it is determined upon, therefore, Monimia, I ſhall go—and perhaps we ſhall never meet again: yet you now refuſe to grant me the only happineſs that poſſibly my deſtiny will ever ſuffer me to taſte—I mean that of being of ſome little ſervice to you. What harm can there really be, Monimia, in what I requeſt? Have we not lived from children together, like brother and ſiſter? and why ſhould we give up the ſweet and innocent pleaſure of loving each other, becauſe your aunt is of a temper ſo deteſtably ſevere and ſuſpicious?"

"Indeed I know not," ſaid Monimia, whoſe tears now ſtreamed down her cheeks; "but I know, Orlando, that I cannot refuſe what you aſk; for, indeed, I do not believe you would deſire me to act wrong."

"No, I would die firſt."

"Tell me then, what would you have me do? I tremble ſo that I am really ready to ſink, leſt my aunt ſhould come: tell me, dear Orlando, what would you have me do?"

"Replace your bed as ſoon as I am gone, and I will take care that no ſigns ſhall remain below of the diſcovery I have made. As ſoon as the family are all in bed, and you are ſure your aunt is gone for the night, I will come up and fetch you into the ſtudy; where, whenever I am here, we can read for an hour or two every night: tell me, Monimia, do you agree to this?"

"I do," replied ſhe; "and now, dear Orlando, go; it will ſoon be tea-time, my aunt will come to call me."

"You will be ready then to-night, Monimia?"

"To-night?"

"Yes; for why ſhould we loſe an hour, when perhaps ſo few are left me? When I am gone to ſome diſtant part of the world, you may be ſorry for me, Monimia, and repent

repent that when we could ſee each other you refuſed."

The idea of his going, perhaps for ever, was inſupportable, and the timid doubts of Monimia vaniſhed before it. She thought at that moment, that to paſs one hour with him were well worth any riſk—even though her aunt ſhould diſcover and kill her. She heſitated therefore no longer, but promiſed to be ready in the evening, and to liſten for his ſignal. Having thus gained his point, Orlando no longer refuſed to quit her, but returned by his propitious ſtair-caſe; and replacing the boards, at its entrance below, as nearly as poſſible as he found them, he went out unſeen by any body; and going back to the road which led through the park, he walked haſtily acroſs that part of it that was immediately before the windows of the apartment where Mrs. Rayland ſat; and then went into the houſe, and ſent up, as wa his cuſtom, to know if he might be admitted. She ordered him to be ſhewn up, and received him

with pleaſure; for ſhe juſt then was in a very ill humour, and wanted ſomebody in whom ſhe could find a patient liſtener, while ſhe related the cauſe of it, and declaimed againſt the perſons who had occaſioned it—which was thus:

The eſtates in this country were very large, and that poſſeſſed by the houſe of Rayland yielded in extent to none, but was equal to that of its neareſt neighbour, a nobleman, who owned a great extent of country which immediately adjoined to the manors and farms of Mrs. Rayland, and on which there was alſo a fine old houſe, ſituated in the midſt of the domain, at the diſtance of about five miles from Rayland Hall, a river dividing the two eſtates, which was the joint property of both.

Lord Carloraine, the laſt poſſeſſor of this property, was a man very far advanced in life. Many years had paſſed ſince the world in which he had lived had diſappeared; and being no longer able or deſirous to take part in what was paſſing about a court,

a court, to him wholly unintereſting, and being a widower without children, he had retired above thirty years before to his paternal ſeat; where he lived in ſplendid uniformity, receiving only the nobility of the county and the baronets (whom he conſidered as forming an order that made a very proper barrier between the peerage and the ſquirality), with all the maſſive dignity and magnificent dulneſs that their fathers and grandfathers had been entertained with ſince the beginning of the century. Filled with high ideas of the conſequence of ancient blood, he ſuffered no conſideration to interfere with his reſpect for all who had that advantage to boaſt; while, for the upſtart rich men of the preſent day, he felt the moſt ineffable contempt; and while ſuch were, in neighbouring counties, ſeen to figure away on recently acquired fortunes, Lord Carloraine uſed to pique himſelf upon the inviolability of that part of the world where he lived—and ſay, that very fortunately for the morals and manners of

the country, it had not been choſen by nabobs and contractors for the diſplay of their wealth and taſte. And that none ſuch might gain any footing in the neighbourhood, he purchaſed every farm that was to be ſold; and contrived to be ſo much of a deſpot himſelf, that thoſe who were only beginning to be great, ſhunned his eſtabliſhed greatneſs as inimical to their own.

Mrs. Rayland perfectly agreed with him in theſe ſentiments; and had the moſt profound reſpect for a nobleman, who acknowledged, proud as he was of his own family, that it had no other ſuperiority over that of Rayland, than in poſſeſſing an higher title. He had been, though a much younger man, acquainted with the late Sir Hildebrand; and whenever Mrs. Rayland and Lord Carloraine met, which they did in cumbrous ſtate twice or thrice a year, their whole converſation conſiſted of eulogiums on the days that were paſſed, in expreſſing their diſlike of all that was

now

now acting in a degenerate world, and their contempt of the actors.

But the winter preceding the period of which this history is relating the events, had carried off this ancient and noble friend at the age of ninety-six, to the regret of nobody so much as of Mrs. Rayland. His estate fell to the grandson of his only sister, a man of three-and-twenty, who was as completely the nobleman of the present day, as his uncle had been the representative of those who lived in the reign of George the First. He cared nothing for the ancient honours of his family; and would not have passed a fortnight in the gloomy solitude of his uncle's castle, to have been master of six times its revenue. His paternal property and parliamentary interest lay in a northern county; and therefore, as ready money was a greater object to him than land in another part of England, he offered the estate of Lord Carloraine to sale, as soon as it came into his possession; and in

a few months it was bought by the ſon of a rich merchant—a young man, lately of age, of the name of Stockton; whoſe father having had very lucrative contracts in that war which terminated in 1763, had left his ſon a minor with a fortune, which at the end of a ten years minority amounted to little ſhort of half a million.

The purchaſe of Carloraine Caſtle by ſuch a man had given Mrs. Rayland inexpreſſible concern and mortification, which every circumſtance that came to her knowledge had contributed to increaſe. She had already heard enough to foreſee all the inconveniencies of this exchange of neighbours; on which ſhe dwelt continually, yet ſeemed to take ſtrange pains to irritate her own uneaſineſs by daily enquiries into the alterations and proceedings of Mr. Stockton; who, even before the purchaſe was generally known to be completed, had begun, under the auſpices of modern taſte, to new model every thing. He came down to Carloraine

Caſtle

Caſtle twice or thrice a week, every time with a new ſet of company; almoſt every one of his viſitors was willing to aſſiſt him in his plan of improvements, and he liſtened to them all—ſo that what was built up to-day, was pulled down to-morrow. All the workmen, ſuch as bricklayers, &c. &c. in the neighbourhood, for many miles, were engaged to work at the Caſtle; and the delicacies which uſed to be ſupplied by the neighbouring country, and in which Mrs. Rayland had uſually a preference, were now offered firſt to "his honour, 'Squire Stockton:"—and his honour's ſervants, to whom the regulation of his houſe was entruſted, were ſo willing to do credit to their maſter's large fortune, that they gave London prices for every thing; and the vicinity of affluent luxury was ſeverely felt by thoſe to whom it was of much more rea conſequence than to Mrs. Rayland.

To her, however, this circumſtance was particularly grating. She complained bitterly to every body ſhe ſaw, that poultry,

if

if ſhe had by any accident occaſion to buy it, was doubled in price; that the prime ſea fiſh was carried to the Caſtle; and more money demanded for the refuſe, than ſhe was accuſtomed to give for the fineſt. But with the beginning of September more aggravating offences began alſo. An army of ſportſmen came down to the Caſtle, who had no reſpect for the hitherto inviolate manors, nor for the preſerved grounds around Rayland Hall, which not even the game-keepers ever alarmed with an hoſtile ſound. Her park—even her park, where no profane foot had ever been ſuffered to enter, was now invaded; and on the ſecond of September, the day of which the occurrences have been here related, five young men and two ſervants, with a whole kennel of pointers, had croſſed the park, and killed three brace of partridges within its encloſure, laughing at the threats, and threatening in their turns the keepers who had attempted to oppoſe them.

No injury or affront that could be de-

viſed

viſed could have made ſo deep an impreſſion on Mrs. Rayland's mind, as ſuch a treſpaſs. She was yet in the firſt paroxyſm of her diſpleaſure, though the occaſion of it happened early in the morning, when Orlando was admitted; whoſe mind, attuned to the harmonizing hope of being indulged with the frequent ſight of Monimia, was but little in uniſon with the petulant and querulous complaints of Mrs. Rayland; while ſhe for above an hour held forth with unwearied invective againſt the new inhabitant of Carloraine. "Theſe," cried ſhe, "theſe are modern gentlemen!—Gentlemen! a diſgrace to the name!—City apprentices, that uſed to live ſoberly at their ſhops, are turned ſportſmen, forſooth, and have the impudence to call themſelves gentlemen. I hear, and I ſuppoſe 'tis true enough, that Mr. Philip Somerive thinks proper to be acquainted with this muſhroom fellow—and to be one of his party!—Pray, child, can you tell me—is it true?"

"I believe, madam, my brother has ſome

ſome acquaintance, but I fancy only a ſlight acquaintance, with Mr. Stockton."

"Oh! I have very little curioſity—I dare ſay he is one of the ſet, and it is very fit he ſhould. 'Birds of a feather, you know, flock together.' But this I aſſure you, Mr. Orlando—take this from me—that if you ſhould ever think proper to know that perſon, that Stockton, your viſits here will from that time be diſpenſed with."

Orlando, conſcious that he had never exchanged a word with any inhabitant or viſitant of Carloraine, and conſcious too that all his wiſhes were centred in what the Hall contained, aſſured Mrs. Rayland with equal warmth and ſincerity, that he never had, nor ever would have, any connexion with the people who aſſembled there. "So far from my wiſhing to hold with ſuch people any friendly converſe, I ſhall hardly be able to refrain from remonſtrating with them on their very improper and unhandſome manner of acting towards you, madam; and if I meet them on your grounds,

I ſhall,

I ſhall, unleſs you forbid me, very freely tell them my opinion of their conduct."

Mrs. Rayland had never in her life been ſo pleaſed with Orlando as ſhe was at that moment. The readineſs with which he entered into her injuries, and the ſpirit with which he undertook to check the aggreſſors, placed him higher in her favour than he had ever yet been; but her way of teſtifying this her ſatisfaction, conſiſted in what of all others was at this moment the moſt mortifying; for ſhe invited him to ſtay to ſupper in her apartment, which was a favour ſhe hardly did him twice a year. Orlando, wretched as it made him, could not make any excuſe to eſcape; and it was near an hour later than uſual, before Mrs. Rayland, retiring, diſmiſſed Orlando to watch for the ſilence of the houſe, which was a ſignal for his going to the beloved turret.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

THE clock in the ſervants' hall ſtruck twelve, and was anſwered by that in the north gallery. With yet deeper tone the hour was re-echoed from the great clock in the cupola over the ſtables; when Orlando, liſtening a moment to hear if all was quiet, proceeded through an arched paſſage which led from the library to the chapel, and then through the chapel itſelf, whoſe principal entrance was from a porch which opened to a ſort of triangular court on the back of the houſe next the park. He had previouſly unbarred the chapel door, which was ſlightly ſecured by an iron rod: the lock had long ſince been ruſted by time, and the key loſt; for, ſince the death of Sir Hildebrand, who was buried with

with his anceſtors in the chancel, the ladies his daughters had found themſelves too much affected to enter the chapel (which was alſo the church of the ſmall pariſh of Rayland), and had removed the parochial ſervice to that of the next pariſh, within a mile: and as both belonged to them, the livings were united, and the people of either were content to ſay their prayers wherever their ladies choſe to appoint.

Orlando, till he found it opened his way to Monimia without going through or near any inhabited part of the houſe, had never explored the chapel; but the night before that on which the experiment was to be made, he had taken care to ſee that in his paſſage through it he had no impediment to fear; for of thoſe ſuperſtition might have raiſed to deter a weaker mind, or one engaged in a leſs animating cauſe, he was inſenſible.

He now, having convinced himſelf that all the family were retired, walked ſoftly through the aiſle; and having without any difficulty

difficulty opened the door of the porch, that adjoined the pavement around the eaſt or back front, he ſtepped with light feet along it, entered the lower room of the turret which was nearly oppoſite, and aſcended ſtill as ſilently as he could the narrow ſtair-caſe.

"Monimia! Monimia!" cried he in a half whiſper, "Monimia, are you ready?" "I am," replied a low and faltering voice. "Remove the hangings then," ſaid Orlando. Slowly the faltering hands of the trembling girl removed them. Orlando eagerly received her as ſhe came through the door-way. "Are you here at laſt?" cried he vehemently. "Shall I be at liberty at laſt to ſee you? But how cold you are! how you tremble!" "Ah! Mr. Orlando," anſwered Monimia, half ſhrinking from him, "ah! I am ſo certain that all this is wrong, I ſo dread a diſcovery, that it is impoſſible to conquer my terrors: beſides, I have recollected that one of the windows of my aunt's cloſet up ſtairs looks this way.

way. If ſhe ſhould be in it, if ſhe ſhould ſee us!"

"How can ſhe be in it without a light? She hardly ſits there in the dark for her amuſement. You know it is impoſſible ſhe can have any ſuſpicion; yet you torment yourſelf, and deſtroy all my happineſs by your timidity. Ah, Monimia! you are cruel to me." "I would not be cruel to you for a thouſand worlds, Orlando, you know I would not. But, if I were to die, I cannot conquer my terrors. I tremble too with cold as well as with fright; for I have waited ſo long paſt my hour of going to bed, that I am half frozen."

"And yet you are not glad to ſee me, Monimia, when at laſt I am come?"

"Indeed I am glad, Orlando; but huſh! hark, ſurely I heard a noiſe. Liſten a moment, for heaven's ſake, before we go down."

"It is nothing," ſaid Orlando, after a pauſe, "it is nothing, upon my ſoul, but the

the wind that ruſhes up the narrow ſtaircaſe to the top of the tower."

"Speak low, however," replied Monimia, as ſhe gave him her cold tremulous hand to lead her ſlowly down the ruined ſteps; "ſpeak very low; or rather let us be quite ſilent, for you remember what an echo there is in the court."

They then proceeded ſilently along the flag-ſtones that ſurrounded the court opening on one ſide to the park, and entered the porch of the chapel; where when Monimia arrived, ſhe ſeemed ſo near fainting, that, as they were now ſheltered from all obſervation, Orlando entreated her to ſit down on one of the thick old worm-eaten wooden benches that were fixed on either ſide.

Unable to ſupport herſelf, Orlando made her lean againſt him, as endeavouring to re-aſſure her, he beſought her to conquer an alarm, "for which," ſaid he, "Monimia, I cannot account. What do you fear, my ſweet friend? Do you already

repent having entruſted yourſe lf with me ?"

"Oh! no indeed," ſighed Monimia, "but the chapel!" "What of the chapel?" cried Orlando impatiently. "It is haunted, you know, every night by the ſpirit of one of the Lady Raylands, who I know not how long ago died for love, and whoſe ghoſt now ſits every night in the chancel, and ſometimes walks round the houſe, and particularly along the galleries, at midnight, groaning and lamenting her fate."

Orlando, laughing at her ſimplicity, cried, "And who, my dear Monimia, who has violated thy natural good ſenſe by teaching thee theſe ridiculous ſtories? Believe me, none of the Lady Raylands, as you called them, ever died for love; indeed I never heard that any of them ever were in love but my grandmother, who ſaved herſelf the abſurdity of dying, by marrying the man ſhe liked, in deſpite of the oppoſing pride of her family; and as ſhe was very happy, and never repented her diſobedience, I do not

not believe her ſpirit walks: or if it ſhould, Monimia, if it were poſſible that it ſhould, could you not face a ghoſt with me for your protector?"

"Any living creature I ſhould not fear, Orlando, if you were with me; but there is ſomething ſo dreadful in the idea of a ſpirit!"

"This is not a place," ſaid Orlando with quickneſs, "this is not a place to argue with your prejudices, Monimia, for you ſeem half dead with cold; but come, I beſeech you, into the library, where there is a fire, and truſt to my arm to defend you from all ſupernatural beings at leaſt on the way."

He then drew her arm within his, and puſhed open the door of the chapel. When Monimia felt the cold damp that environed her as he ſhut it after them, and found herſelf in ſuch a place without any other light than what was afforded by two gothic windows half blocked with ſtone work, and almoſt all the reſt by ſtained glaſs, at mid-

night, in a night of September, ſhe again ſhuddered, and ſhrunk back: but Orlando again encouraging her, and ridiculing her fears, ſhe moved on; and paſſing the ſtone paſſage, he at length ſeated her ſafely by the ſtudy fire, which he now repleniſhed with wood. As ſhe was ſtill pale and trembling, he brought her a glaſs of wine (of which Mrs. Rayland allowed him whatever he choſe), which he inſiſted on her drinking, and then, ſeating himſelf by her, enquired, with a gay ſmile, how ſhe did after her encounter with the lady who died for love?

"You think me ridiculous, Orlando, and perhaps I am ſo; but my aunt has often told me, that ghoſts always appeared to people who were doing wrong, to reproach them; and, alas! Orlando, I am too ſenſible that I am not doing right."

"Curſe on her prudiſh falſehood!" cried the impetuous Orlando. "If ghoſts, as you call them, were always on the watch to perſecute evil doers, I believe from my ſoul that *ſhe* would have been beſet by thoſe

of all the Raylands that are packed together in the chancel."

Such was the awe of her aunt in which Monimia had been brought up, that the little reſpect and vehement manner in which Orlando ſpoke of her had in it additional terror. She did not ſpeak; ſhe was not able: but the tears which had till then trembled in her eyes now ſtole down her cheeks. Orlando was tempted to kiſs them away before they reached her boſom; but he remembered that ſhe was wholly in his power, and that he owed her more reſpect than it would have been neceſſary to have ſhewn even in public.

"Let us talk no more of your old aunt," re-aſſumed Orlando; "but tell me, Monimia, all that has happened in theſe long, long months of abſence."

"Happened, Mr. Orlando!" repeated Monimia.

"Nay," interrupted he, "let me not be *Mr.* Orlando, my lovely friend, but call me Orlando, and try to fancy me your brother.

ther. Tell me, Monimia, how have you paſſed your time ſince I was allowed to ſee you laſt? What an age it is ago! Have you practiſed your writing, Monimia, and has Lennard allowed you the uſe of any books?"

"A few I got at by the aſſiſtance of Betty Richards, who has the key of this room to clean it when you are abſent, Orlando; but if my aunt had found it out, ſhe would never have forgiven either of us. I was forced therefore to hide the books ſhe took out for me with the greateſt care, and to read only by ſnatches. And as to writing, I have done a little of it becauſe you deſired me; but it has been very difficult; for my aunt Lennard never would allow me to have pens and ink; and Betty Richards has given me theſe too by ſtealth, when ſhe was able to procure them, as if they were for herſelf, of Mr. Pattenſon the butler, who was always very kind to her about ſuch things, till a week or two ago; when he was ſo croſs at her aſking for more paper,

that we thought it better to let alone applying to him again for ſome time."

"The old thief was jealous, I ſuppoſe," anſwered Orlando. "I believe he was," ſaid Monimia; "for he has a liking, I fancy, to Betty, though to be ſure he is old enough to be her father."

Orlando was now ſtruck with an apprehenſion which had never before occurred to him: he feared that, in the gratitude of her unadulterated heart for the kindneſs ſhe received from this Betty Richards, ſhe might betray to her the ſecret of their nocturnal viſits; and he knew that the love of goſſiping, the love of finery, the love of nice morſels which the butler had it in his power to give, or even the love of ſhewing ſhe was entruſted with a ſecret, were any of them ſufficient to overſet all the fidelity which this girl (the under houſe-maid) might either feel or profeſs to feel for Monimia.

Againſt this therefore it was neceſſary to put her on her guard; which Orlando endeavoured

deavoured to do in the moſt impreſſive manner poſſible, and even urged her with warmth to give him her ſolemn promiſe that ſhe never would entruſt this ſervant with any ſecret, or mention to her his name on any account whatever.

"Indeed, Orlando," replied Monimia, when he had finiſhed this warm exhortation, "indeed you need not be uneaſy or anxious about it; for there is one reaſon that, if I had no other, would never permit me to tell this poor girl that I meet you unknown to my aunt."

"And what is that?"

"It is, that Betty is, like myſelf, a very friendleſs orphan, a poor girl that my aunt has taken from the pariſh; and as I know very well that all our meetings will one day or other be diſcovered, it would entirely ruin her, and occaſion the loſs of her place and her character, if Betty were ſuppoſed to know any thing about it; therefore you may be aſſured, Orlando, that ſhe never ſhall: for whatever miſery it may be my fate to

ſuffer myſelf, I ſhall not ſo much mind, as I ſhould being the cauſe of ruining and injuring another perſon, eſpecially a friendleſs girl, who has always been as kind to me as her ſituation allowed her to be."

Enchanted with her native rectitude of heart and generoſity of ſpirit, Orlando rapturouſly exclaimed, "Charming girl! how every ſentence you utter, every ſentiment of your pure and innocent mind delight me! No, Monimia, I am very ſure that ſuch a ſecurity as you have given me is of equal force, perhaps ſuperior, as it ought to be, even to your faith to me—ſuperior, Monimia, to the wiſh which I am ſure you have, to ſpare me any ſort of unhappineſs." The fine eyes of Monimia were ſwimming in tears, as, tenderly preſſing her hand between his, Orlando ſaid this. "You do me juſtice," ſaid ſhe in a faltering voice, "and I thank you. I do not know, Orlando, why I ſhould be aſhamed to ſay that I love you better than any body elſe in the world; for indeed who is there in it

that

that I have to love? If you were gone, it would be all a deſert to me; for, though I hope I am grateful, and not undutiful to my aunt Lennard, I find I do not love her as I love you. But indeed I do believe ſhe would not have me feel affection for any body; for ſhe is always telling me, that it is the moſt diſgraceful and odious thing imaginable, for a young woman, dependent as I am, to think about any perſon, man, woman, or child; and that, if I would not be an undone and diſgraced creature, I muſt mind nothing but praying to God, which I hope I never neglected, and learning to earn my bread by my hands. And then ſhe tells me continually how much I owe her for taking me into her lady's family, and what a wicked wretch I ſhould be if I were ungrateful."

"Don't tell me any more about your aunt, do not, I entreat you," cried Orlando impatiently. "I ſhould be ſorry to ſay any thing that ſhould ſtain, even with the moſt remote ſuſpicion of ingratitude,

that unadulterated mind. But——I cannot——no, it is impoſſible to reſiſt ſaying, that, like all other uſurped authority, the power of your aunt is maintained by unjuſt means, and ſupported by prejudices, which if once looked at by the eye of reaſon would fall. So ſlender is the hold of tyranny, my Monimia!

"Dear Orlando," ſaid Monimia ſmiling through her tears, "you talk what is by me very little underſtood." "No!" replied he, "ſhe has taken care to fetter you in as much ignorance as poſſible; but your mind riſes above the obſcurity with which ſhe would ſurround it. She has however brought in ſupernatural aid; and, fearful of not being able to keep you in ſufficient awe by her terrific ſelf, ſhe has called forth all the deceaſed ladies of the Rayland family, and gentlemen too for aught I know, and beſet you with ſpirits and hobgoblins if you dare to walk about the houſe."

"Ah! Orlando," anſwered Monimia timidly, and throwing round the room a half

fearful

fearful glance, "I do believe you injure my aunt Lennard in that notion; for I am almoſt ſure ſhe believes what ſhe tells me."

"Pooh!" replied he, "ſhe has too much ſenſe. A good bottle of Barbadoes water, or ratafia, would call your pious aunt in the darkeſt night, and juſt as the clock ſtrikes twelve, into the very chancel of the chapel itſelf, or even into the vaults under it."

"Do not laugh at ſuch things, Orlando, do not, pray! unleſs you are very ſure they are all fooliſh and ſuperſtitious fancies. I aſſure you, Orlando, that having been uſed to walk about this great old rambling houſe by myſelf, at all times of the day, and ſometimes, when you have not been here, late of a night, I cannot have been much uſed to indulge fear; for, frightened or not frightened, I muſt have gone if my lady or my aunt had ordered me. But though I am not the leaſt afraid, or uſed not to be afraid, when I was aſſured in my own heart

that I had never done or intended any harm, yet I have ſeen and heard———"

"Nay then, Monimia, tell me what you have ſeen and heard," cried he, fixing his eyes eagerly on her face, and pulling his chair nearer to hers, "and let us draw round the fire and have a diſcourſe upon apparitions."

"You will laugh at me, Orlando," ſaid ſhe, looking ſmilingly and yet grave; "but what I have to tell you is true nevertheleſs."

"Tell it then, Monimia—If any proofs have power to make me a convert, they muſt be yours."

"Well then, Orlando, I aſſure you it is no fancy, but abſolutely true, that ſome time laſt February, at which time my aunt was very ill by the fall ſhe had down ſtairs, ſhe uſed to intruſt me with the keys, and to ſend me all about the houſe for things ſhe wanted. You know that when Mr. Patetn-ſon is out, ſhe always inſiſts upon having the keys of the great cellars, as well as all the reſt, left with her; and that, after quar-

relling ſome years about it, ſhe has got the better; and, though he will not give her his keys, has my lady's leave to have keys of her own, which ſhe always takes particular pleaſure in uſing when he is out (which he happened to be that night at the chriſtening of Mr. Butterworth's child), whether ſhe really wants the things ſhe ſends for or no. It was a terrible ſtormy night and very dark, when my aunt, who was but juſt got well enough to ſit in my lady's room, took it into her head, after every body was gone to bed but Betty Richards and I, that ſhe wanted ſome hot ſhrub and water. She ſent me to look for ſhrub in her cloſet, where I believe ſhe knew there was none; and when I came back to ſay there was none, ſhe bade me go into the eaſt-wing cellar, which goes, you know, under the houſe towards this end of it, and fetch half a dozen bottles; and ſhe gave me the key and a baſket. I ſtood trembling with fear; for had I been ſure of being killed even at that moment, I am very certain I could not have determined to venture alone."

"What is the fooliſh girl afraid of?" ſaid my aunt. "Of going alone ſo far, Ma'am," ſaid I, "at this time of night."

"And is not *this* time of night," ſaid my aunt angrily, "or is not *any* time of night, or any time of day, the ſame thing to *you?* Idiot!—and do you dare to affect any choice, how and when you ſhall obey my commands?"

"Oh! no indeed, my dear dear aunt," anſwered I trembling, "no indeed; but remember—remember, before you are ſo angry with me, that an hundred and an hundred times you have told me, that all the galleries and paſſages about this houſe are haunted; and that you have yourſelf ſeen ſtrange ſights and heard frightful noiſes, though you never would tell me what they were: how ſhall I, my dear aunt, encounter that which has terrified you?—Pray, forgive me! or, if you will not, inflict upon me any puniſhment you pleaſe: only be aſſured, my dear dear aunt, that, terrible as your anger is to your poor girl, ſhe had ra-

ther endure it than go into thoſe paſſages and vaults alone."

"Why, thou art a driveller, a perfect idiot," anſwered Mrs. Lennard, "and art fit only for a cap and bells, clean ſtraw, and a whirligig.—Apparitions, you ſtupid fool! But tell me, will you go for what I want, if this other moppet, who looks as white as a cheeſe-curd, will go with you?"

"The offer of going with Betſy Richards had ſomehow quite a charm with it, compared with the terrors of going alone; and therefore I readily agreed to the propoſal, flattering myſelf that Betſy would refuſe, and that I ſhould ſo be excuſed.

"But poor Betſy had, like myſelf, a moſt terrible awe of my aunt, whom ever ſince ſhe could remember ſhe had been taught to fear. "To be ſure, I will go," ſaid poor Betſy; "to be certain, I will go, if madam ſhe deſires it; though for certain——"

"None of your ifs, you ſilly baggage, but here, take the candle; and do you, you nonſenſical ninnyhammer, take the baſket, and

and fetch inſtantly what I want. The old ſhrub ſtands in a bin, quite at the lower end of the fartheſt arched vault, next the chapel wing: put your hands elbow deep in the ſaw-duſt, and you will feel it; bring half a dozen bottles, and mind you take care of your candle—for the whole family of Rayland are piled up in their velvet coffins within two or three feet of you; and it would be a very unhandſome thing to ſet their old dry bones in a blaze on their own premiſes."

"Neither Betſy nor I dared anſwer; for, as my aunt ſpoke theſe laſt words, ſhe waved her hands for us to go. After we were out of hearing, I, who held Betſy faſt by the arm, expreſſed my apprehenſion at what had paſſed. I did this more particularly, becauſe I had never heard my aunt talk ſo freely before. Betſy, frightened as ſhe was at the thought of the expedition we were undertaking, could not help tittering at the ſurpriſe I expreſſed, and ſaid, "Lord! why, the old woman has been ſitting ſo long after

after ſupper with Madam, that ſhe has been taking care to keep the cold out of her ſtomach:"—meaning that Mrs. Lennard had been drinking too much, which till then I had never any notion of. "I am ſure," replied I to my trembling companion, as we went down the cellar ſtairs, and were frightened by the echo of our feet, "I am ſure, Beſſy, we want ſomething to keep the cold of fear out of *ours*.—Do I tremble as much as you do, and do I look as pale?" "Oh! huſh," ſaid ſhe, "huſh! I ſhall drop if I hear a voice—it ſounds ſo among theſe hollow doors." Her teeth chattered in her head, and ſhe held the candle in her hand ſo unſteadily that I was afraid it would have gone out. In this manner we proceeded to the bottom of the ſtairs, which you know are very long, and had got half a dozen paces along the paſſage, which is, you may remember, very high and narrow and long, when we heard a loud ruſhing noiſe at the other end of it. Something came ſweep along; but Betſy let fall the candle, and

and fell herſelf againſt the wall, where I endeavoured in vain to ſupport her. She ſunk quite down; and, as I ſtooped to aſſiſt her, ſomebody certainly bruſhed by me. I know not what I heard afterwards, for fear deprived me of my ſenſes. This, however, laſted but a moment; for, my recollection returning, I was ſenſible that, whatever there was to hurt us, we ſhould do more wiſely to endeavour to return back to my aunt's room than to remain in that diſmal place. With great difficulty, by rubbing her hands within mine, and reaſoning with her as ſoon as ſhe ſeemed able to hear it, I prevailed upon Betſy Richards to try to walk. The apprehenſion that this frightful apparition might return (which ſhe whiſpered me had the figure of a tall man in a white or light-coloured gown), had more effect upon her than any thing I could ſay; and ſhe conſented to try to return up the ſtairs. It was ſo dark, however, that we were obliged to feel our way with our hands; and I own I every moment expected to put them againſt

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the frightful figure which my companion had ſeen."

"But you were wrong there," ſaid the incredulous Orlando; "for, if it were a ghoſt, Monimia, you know a ghoſt is only air, and of courſe you could not have touched it.—But tell me how your aunt received you."

"It was, I am ſure, almoſt half an hour before we got back, more dead than alive, to the oak parlour. She aſked us very impatiently, what we had been ſo long about? but neither of us was preſently able to anſwer. She ſaw how it was by our faces, but very ſharply bade us tell her that moment what was the matter. Betſy had then more courage than I had; for I was more afraid of my aunt, if poſſible, than of the ghoſt, and ſo ſhe related as well as ſhe could all ſhe ſaw, or fancied ſhe ſaw. Mrs. Lennard was extremely angry with us both, and ſcolded us for a quarter of an hour; which I thought a little unreaſonable towards me, ſince ſhe was angry with me now for being afraid of the

the very things ſhe had been teaching me to fear. However, as there was no chance of perſuading us to make another attempt that night, and ſhe was diſabled by lameneſs from going herſelf, ſhe was forced to be content with ſome other of the cordials ſhe had in her cloſet; and afterwards ſhe rather wiſhed to have the ſtory huſhed up and forgotten, for ſomehow or other that key of the cellar was never found after that night. The baſket and the candle remained where they were dropped; yet the key, which was a very great heavy key, and which I had in my hand, was gone; and Mr. Patterſon would have made ſuch a racket about it, that my aunt, as ſhe had another, let the ſtory drop, and contrived an excuſe a week or two afterwards, when ſhe was able to get about herſelf, to have the lock changed."

"And this is all the reaſon you have, my Monimia, from your own obſervation, to believe in ſpirits?" ſaid Orlando.

"All!"

"All!" replied ſhe, "and is it not then enough?"

"Not quite, I fear, to convince the ſcepticiſm of the preſent day. I do not, however, wiſh to prejudice your mind on the other ſide, by bringing arguments againſt the poſſibility of their exiſtence; but I will give your reaſon an opportunity of deciding for itſelf. Againſt to-morrow night, when we ſhall meet again, I will look out and mark for you all thoſe ſtories of ſupernatural appearances that are related by the moſt reaſonable people, and are the beſt authenticated. You ſhall fairly enquire whether any of thoſe viſits of the dead were ever found to be of any uſe to the living. We are told that they have been ſeen (as is reported of that viſion which Clarendon tells of), to warn the perſons to whom they appeared, or ſome others to whom they were to repeat their miſſion, of impending danger. But the danger, however foretold, has never been avoided; and ſhall we therefore believe, that an all-wiſe and all-

all-powerful Being ſhall ſuffer a general law of nature to be ſo uſeleſsly violated, and ſhall make the dead reſtleſs, only to terrify the living?"

"Oh! but in caſes of murder you know what ſpectres have appeared!"

"Yes, Monimia, to the conſcience of the guilty; but even that is not always ready to raiſe hideous ſhadows to perſecute the ſanguinary monſters who are ſtained with crimes; for if it were, Monimia, I am afraid not one of our kings or heroes could have ſlept in their beds."

"And yet," ſaid Monimia ſhuddering, "and yet, Orlando, you ſometimes talk of being a ſoldier!"

"Ah! my ſweet friend," replied Orlando, "I have no choice, but muſt be what they would have me. Yet believe me, Monimia, if I had a choice, it would be to paſs all my life in ſome quiet retirement with you. We ſhould not want either of us to be very rich, for we ſhould certainly be very happy."

To this poor Monimia felt herſelf quite unable to anſwer; but ſighing deeply, from the fear that it could never be, ſhe tried to turn the diſcourſe: "Is it not very late, Orlando," ſaid ſhe, "and had I not better go?"

"If you inſiſt upon going yet, I ſhall be half tempted to let you travel through the chapel alone," replied he ſmiling, "and, to revenge myſelf for your deſertion, expoſe you to meet the tall man in the white dreſs." He then led the converſation to other ſubjects, gave her ſome books he had ſelected for her reading, and ſome materials for writing; and, after inſiſting upon her promiſe to meet him the next night, he conſented that ſhe ſhould return to her aunt. As, with his arm round her waiſt, he conducted her through the chapel, and ſtill found her tremble, he gently reproached her with it. "Ah!" ſaid ſhe, "Orlando, you are ſurely unreaſonable, if you expect me to be as courageous as you are!" "Not at all," anſwered he; "for you may derive your

your confidence from the ſame ſource, and ſay, as I do, *I fear no evil angel, and have offended no good one.*"

Monimia promiſed to do all ſhe could towards conquering her apprehenſions. They were by this time arrived at the door of her chamber, where tenderly kiſſing her hand, he again bade her good night, or rather good morning, for it was near three o'clock; and waiting till he heard the door ſafely concealed by her bed, and hearing that all was ſecure, he returned to his own room, and went to reſt in ſpirits diſpoſed to indulge delicious dreams of happineſs to come.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

ANOTHER and another evening Orlando attended at the turret, and the apprehenſions of Monimia decreaſed in proportion as her reaſon, aided by her confidence in him, taught her that there was in reality little to fear from the interpoſition of ſupernatural agency. The dread of being diſcovered by people in the houſe, however, ſtill interrupted the hours which paſſed with imperceptible rapidity while they were together. This might happen a thouſand ways, which Monimia was ingenious in finding out; while Orlando was ſometimes ſucceſsful, and ſometimes failed, in ridiculing thoſe apprehenſions which he could not always help ſharing.

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The mind of the innocent Monimia had been till now like that of Miranda in her deſert iſland. To her, the world that was paſt and that which was now paſſing were alike unknown; and all the impreſſions that her infant underſtanding had received, tended only to confirm the artificial influence which her aunt endeavoured to eſtabliſh over her imagination. Her poverty, her dependence, the neceſſity of her earning a ſubſiſtence by daily labour, had been the only leſſons ſhe had been taught; and the only hope held out to her, that of paſſing through life in an obſcure ſervice.

But ſhe had learned now that, abject and poor as ſhe was, ſhe was an object of affection to Orlando, who ſeemed in her eyes the repreſentation of divinity. The reading he had directed her to purſue, had aſſiſted in teaching her ſome degree of ſelf-value. She found that to be poor was not diſgraceful in the eye of Heaven, or in the eyes of the good upon earth; and that the great

great teacher of that religion which ſhe had been bid to profeſs, though very little inſtructed in it, was himſelf poor, and the advocate and friend of poverty. In addition to all this knowledge, ſo ſuddenly acquired, ſhe had lately made another diſcovery. Her aunt had always told her that ſhe was a very plain girl, had a bad perſon, and was barely fit to be ſeen; but ſince the marriage of the ſervant who had lived at the Hall during the infancy of Monimia, Betty Richards, the under houſe-maid, had been ordered to do the little that Monimia was allowed to have done in her room. Mrs. Lennard had taken her from the pariſh officers as an apprentice; and having long ſeen her only in her coarſe gown and nailed ſhoes, and obſerved in her manner only a great deal of ruſtic ſimplicity, had not the leaſt idea that under that ſemblance ſhe concealed the cunning and the vanity of a country coquet; and that the firſt week ſhe paſſed in Mrs. Rayland's family had called forth theſe latent qualities. She

was a ruddy, ſhewy girl, with a large but rather a good figure; and her face was no ſooner waſhed, and her hair combed over a roll, than ſhe became an object which attracted the attention of the great Mr. Pattenſon himſelf; who, proceeding in the uſual way by which he had won the favour of ſo many of the ſubaltern nymphs in Mrs. Rayland's kitchen, began to make her many preſents, and to talk of her beauty; and as ſhe could not forbear repeating all theſe extravagant expreſſions of his admiration, Monimia could as little help reflecting, though ſhe was ſomehow humbled as ſhe made the compariſon, that if Betty was ſo handſome, ſhe could not herſelf be ſo ugly as her aunt had always repreſented her. The fineries which her new friend received Monimia beheld without any wiſh to enjoy ſuch herſelf; though on Betty, a poor girl bred in a workhouſe, they had a moſt intoxicating effect. They were given under the ſtricteſt injunctions of ſecrecy, which was tolerably well obſerved towards the reſt of the

the houſe; and the finery, which at firſt conſiſted only of beads and ribbands was reſerved for Sunday afternoons, and put on at a friend's cottage near a diſtant church. But it was not in female nature to conceal theſe acquiſitions from Monimia; and it was in her drawers that they were often depoſited, when there was reaſon to apprehend that the little deal box, which had till lately been amply ſufficient for the check apron and linſey-woolſey gown of Betty, might not ſafely conceal the ribbands "colour of emperors' eyes," the flowered ſhawls, the bugle necklaces, and caps with new edging to them, which ſhe now poſſeſſed.

Sometimes, when Betty obtained leave to go out, and thought that, Mrs. Lennard being engaged with her lady, and the other ſervants gone different ways, ſhe ſhould eſcape unnoticed acroſs the park, ſhe perſuaded Monimia, who knew not how to refuſe her any thing, to let her dreſs at her little glaſs; and there the progreſs of rural

coquetry had full power to diſplay itſelf. She tried on her various topknots, diſpoſed her hair in a thouſand fanciful ways, and called to Monimia for her opinion, which of them was moſt becoming; appealing for the authority of theſe variations to a certain pocket-book, preſented her alſo from the ſame quarter, which repreſented in one of its leaves "ſix young ladies in the moſt faſhionable head-dreſſes for 1776."

Monimia, with all her ingenuous ſimplicity, had ſenſe enough to ſmile at the ridiculous vanity of the girl; and to know, that her accepting all this finery from the old butler was quite wrong. But ſhe felt alſo, that to reprove her for it would look like envy, and that to remonſtrate would probably be vain. She contented herſelf therefore with keeping as much out of her confidence as ſhe could; and had reaſons enough of her own, which were continually ſtrengthened by the exhortations of Orlando, for keeping her from being a too frequent viſitor in her room.

But

But the remarks ſhe made upon all this, and upon numberleſs circumſtances in the houſe which Betty related to her, no longer left her in her original ignorance. In a great houſe there are among the ſervants as many cabals, and as many ſchemes, as among the leaders of a great nation; and few exhibited a greater variety of intereſts than did the family of Mrs. Rayland. Mrs. Lennard at once hated, feared, and courted Pattenſon, who, having been taken a boy from the plough, had been gradually promoted till he became the favourite footman of the elder Mrs. Rayland, who, on the death of an old man who had long occupied that poſt, made him butler; where he was ſuppoſed to have accumulated in the courſe of five-and-twenty years a great deal of money, was known to have ſeveral ſums out at intereſt, and had bought two or three ſmall farms in the county, with the approbation of his lady, whoſe favour had never once failed him, though various attempts had been made to injure him in her opinion

by complaints of his amours. Though he was a perfect Turk in morals, and though in his advanced life he rather indulged than corrected this propenſity to libertiniſm, he had hitherto contrived to eſcape his lady's wrath; and indeed knew that nobody but Mrs. Lennard or the old coachman had, among the domeſtics, intereſt enough to ſhake her good opinion of him; and of both the one and the other, though aware that neither of them bore him any good will, he was tolerably ſecure.

How the prudent and guarded Mrs. Lennard came to be in his power was never fully underſtood; but in his power ſhe certainly felt herſelf: for though they were in habits of frequent ſquabbling about trifles, which indeed with the lady ſeemed neceſſary to break the tedious uniformity of her life, yet whenever ſhe found Mr. Pattenſon really angry, ſhe, albeit unuſed to the condeſcending mood, began to palliate and apologize—and peace was generally made over ſome nice thing, and ſome fine old wine,

wine, by way of a *petit ſouper* in Mr. Pattenſon's parlour, after Mrs. Rayland was gone to bed.

The old coachman, who was the other favourite ſervant, was always a third in theſe peace-making meetings. He was a man grown unwieldy from exceſs of good living, and more than ſeventy years old; but he poſſeſſed an infinite deal of cunning, and knew how to get and how to keep money, with which it was his ambition to portion his two daughters, and to marry them to gentlemen; and his dealings in contraband goods, as Rayland Hall was only five miles from the coaſt, his having the management of the great farms in hand, and his concern in buying and ſelling horſes, were together ſuppoſed to have rendered this object of ambition of eaſy attainment. Of deeper ſagacity than the other two, he foreſaw that the time could not be far diſtant when Rayland Hall, and all the wealth that belonged to it, muſt change its poſſeſſor. It was a plan of Mrs. Lennard and Patten-

ſon to enjoy and to ſecure all they could now, and to be well aſſured of a very conſiderable legacy hereafter. But old Snelcraft had farther hopes; and for that reaſon, though he had at firſt oppoſed as much as he could the reception of Orlando, and ſince expreſſed diſpleaſure towards him, he of late had in his head floating viſions of the probability there was that, if Orlando came to the eſtate, he might marry his favourite daughter, Miſs Patty Snelcraft, who would have ſuch a fine fortune, and was, as her father believed, the very extract of all beauty. Ridiculous and chimerical as ſuch a project was, the old man, in the dotage of his purſe-proud vanity, believed it not only poſſible but probable: for, though he knew that Mrs. Rayland would have diſinherited her own ſon for entertaining ſuch an idea for a moment, yet he ſaw that Mr. Orlando had no pride at all; and he was pretty ſure, from the arrangements that he believed were made as to money, that, great as the ſum of ready money would perhaps be that Mrs.

Rayland

Rayland might leave behind her, none of it would be ſuffered to go to Mr. Orlando. Miſs Patty Snelcraft was, as this precious plan got more entirely the poſſeſſion of her father's imagination, taken from a boarding-ſchool at a neighbouring town, and one luckleſs day brought to church in all the finery which ſhe had there been accuſtomed to wear. But the effect was very far from that her parents intended, who expected that Madam would have ſent for her to the Hall, as ſhe uſed to do at breaking-up, and have commended her beauty and elegance; inſtead of which, Mrs. Rayland no ſooner arrived at home than ſhe ſent for Robin, as ſhe ſtill called her old ſervant, who now was ſeldom able to mount the box himſelf, and aſked, if it was poſſible that the tawdry thing ſhe had ſeen with his wife was his daughter? He anſwered in all humility that it was his eldeſt daughter, who, as ſhe had now finiſhed her learning, he had taken home from boarding-ſchool.

"Finiſhed her learning!" exclaimed the

old lady; "and is *that* what ſhe has learned, to dreſs herſelf out like a ſtage-player, like a mountebank's doxy? Upon my word, Robin, I am ſorry for you. I thought you and your wife had more ſenſe. What! is that a dreſs for a ſober girl, who ought to be a help to her mother, and to take care of her father in his old age?"

"She does, Ma'am, do both, I'll aſſure you," anſwered Robin, terribly ſtung by this reproof, "and is a very good and dutiful child. And as to her fineries, Ma'am, and ſuch like, you are ſenſible that I'm not myſelf no judge of them there things; and my wife I believe thought, that ſeeing how by your goodneſs and my long and faithful ſervice we are well to paſs, for our condition and circumſtances and ſuch like, there would not be no offence whatſumdever in dreſſing our poor girls, being we have but two, a little deſſent and neat, juſt to ſhew that one is no beggar after having ſerved in ſuch a good family ſo many years."

The lady, a little ſoftened by this ſpeech, which

which was made in almoſt a crying tone of voice, replied, "Well well, good Robin, I know how to make allowances; but do you and your wife learn for the future to make a more modeſt uſe of the means you are bleſſed with, and never encourage your girls to vanity and extravagance. Here's Mary here, Lennard's niece, whom I give leave to be in the houſe (Monimia ſtood waiting all this time with the chocolate, which the old lady always ſwallowed as ſoon as ſhe came in from her devotions), ſhe, I aſſure you, comes of parents that many people would call genteel; and yet you ſee, as it has pleaſed Providence to make her a dependent and a ſervant, I never ſuffer her to ſtick herſelf out in feathers and flowers like a May-day girl."

The lecture ended, and the old coachman withdrew, extremely diſcontent that his Patty had been compared to the houſekeeper's niece, who was, as he muttered to himſelf, a mere pauper; and Monimia was not at all flattered by being brought forward as

a compariſon for Miſs Snelcraft, whom the ſervants, and particularly Betty, had been turning into ridicule for her awkward finery and airs of conſequence—nor did the expreſſion, that ſhe was born of parents whom ſome people would call genteel, at all ſweeten the bitterneſs of this compariſon. Monimia, who had before in the courſe of the day received a ſevere mortification from her aunt, in being refuſed leave to go to church, now, as ſoon as her ſervice in waiting on Mrs. Rayland with the chocolate was performed, withdrew to her own room, and indulged her tears. At length ſhe recollected that, though all the reſt of the world might deſpiſe and contemn her, the heart of Orlando was hers; ſhe was ſecure of his affection; he would repeat it to her at night, when he had promiſed to fetch her to his room: and theſe reflections dried her eyes, and diſſipated her ſorrows: they even lent her force to bear, without betraying her impatience, the intruſion of Betty Richards, who ſoon after aſked leave to

come

come in. "Oh, laud! my dear miſs," cried ſhe, as ſoon as ſhe entered the room, "how we be ſhut up in this here old place like two little ſinging-birds in a cage!—I've been trying to perſuade old Jenny to let me take her turn this a'ternoon to go to church, and have promiſed to give her two turns for one; but the croſs old witch ſays indeed ſhe chooſes to go herſelf.—Oh lud lud! I'd give a little finger to go."

"And why are you ſo eager to go to-day, Betty, more than any other afternoon?"

"Oh gad!" replied the girl, "for five hundred reaſons:—firſt, becauſe it's ſo early that I could get away to Weſt Wolverton church with all the eaſe in the world, and 'tis ſuch a ſweet afternoon, and winter will be here now ſo ſoon; beſides that—but you muſt not tell for an hundred pounds—my good old fat ſweetheart brought me home laſt night the moſt beautifulleſt bonnet, ſuch as the millener told him was worn by the tip-top quality in Lonnon—and I die to wear it, and to go to Weſt Wolverton church

church in it this very afternoon; for at ours, you know, I dares as well jump into the fire as put it on."

"But why do your bonnet and your piety conſpire to carry you ſo far juſt this very evening, Betty," ſaid Monimia ſmiling, "when both Eaſt Wolverton and Bartonwick have an evening church, and are not much more than half as far?"

"Oh! thereby hangs a tale—What! you han't heard then, I ſuppoſe, of all the great doings at Weſt Wolverton?"

This was the name of the village in which was ſituated the houſe of Mr. Somerive.—"Great doings!" repeated Monimia, changing colour; "no, I have heard of nothing."

"Why then you muſt know, Miſs, that Mr. Orlando, who was not here laſt night--"

(Monimia knew it well, for they had agreed two nights before not to meet till the preſent evening)—

"Mr. Orlando, I ſay, came over about an hour ago, juſt as my Lady came from church, and after walking backwards and

forwards in his melancholy faſhion, with a book in his hand, upon the broad pavement in the chapel court, which really oft-times rives one's very heart to ſee him, he went away to his ſtudy. For my part, I was ſitting in the window up ſtairs for a moment, for I had juſt been making up my Lady's fire before ſhe came from church—when all of a ſudden I ſaw John Dickman, 'Squire Somerive's groom, come riding up; ſo down I went to ſpeak to him. He gived me a letter, which I carried in to Orlando, who ſeemed monſtrous ſurpriſed at it, as he was but that minute as 'twere come from home; and when I went back to the kitchen John told me, he was ordered to wait for his young maſter—for that Madam Somerive's brother, the London merchant, was come down, with ſome of his family, ſons and daughters, and the gentleman from ſome part beyond ſea, who was to marry the eldeſt Miſs Somerive, for he had got his father's conſent, and the wedding was to take place out of hand. And ſo," added Betty,

Betty, who had almoſt talked herſelf out of breath, "and ſo, as Mr. Phil. is out, gone as he always is upon a viſit to they new-comers up at Caſtle, the 'Squire he ordered John to fetch *our* Orlando out of hand home to entertain all this grand company."

"And he went!" ſaid Monimia in a faint voice, who had changed colour a dozen times during this narration.

"Oh, Lord! yes, to be ſure he went," replied Betty; "yet ſomehow he look'd to me as if he had rather of ſtay'd, and hung about for ſome time, as thof unwilling to go. Lord! ſir, ſaid I, as I went to ſhut up his windows before he lock'd the ſtudy door—Lord, how ſtrange it is that you are not like other young men, and never cares nothing for company and ſuch like! He only ſighed, a ſweet creature!—when I'm ſure, if all the grand lords and dukes, and even the King, and the Prince of Wales, and the Archbiſhop of Oſnabig, and all his Majeſty's court, were to be collected together, there's not one of them to

be

be compared to young 'Squire Orlando.—Lord! what would I give to ſee all theſe gentlefolks together at Weſt Wolverton church, and that dear ſweet Orlando outſhining them all!"

"And that was the reaſon," ſaid Monimia in a ſtill fainter voice, "that you are ſatisfied with no church but Weſt Wolverton? But after all, Betty, pray are you ſure theſe ladies and gentlemen will be there?"

"As ſure as five pence—for John Dickman told me ſo. Oh! that I could but go!—for Orlando, you know, Miſs, who is the ſweeteſt temperd good-naturdeſt cretur in all England, would never tell if he ſaw one ever ſo ſmartly dreſs:—No, egollys! he's more like to give one ſome trifle or other to help one out, than to blab to get one anger."

"Has he ever given you any thing, Betty?" ſaid Monimia, in a voice the tremor of which ſhe could not diſguiſe; for, mingled with numberleſs other ſenſations, ſomething like a half-formed jealouſy and ſuſpicious apprehen-

apprehenſion now entered her heart—"tell me, Betty, what has he ever given you?"

"Why I aſſure you," replied the girl pertly, "not above a month ago neither, a'ter he had been here for almoſt a fortnight, he called me to him as I was a duſting of them there guns and arrows and what d'yecallums, as hangs over the chimney in that parlour as you goes through to get to his ſtudy—And ſo, ſays he, Betty, you've a good deal of trouble in cleaning of my room and making my fire, and perhaps your lady may not recollect it, and ſo may not make you a conſideration for it; and therefore, Betty, I beg you'll accept this, and I wiſh I had it in my power to do better.—And if you'll believe me, Miſs, it was a brand new crown, quite new, a crown piece they told me it was.—I would have given any thing not to have changed it, but to have laid it up as a keepſake—But there!—I had not money enough without it to buy my new cotton gown, when Alexander Macgill the Scotchman called here; and ſo

away

away went my poor dear crown, though I had leverer have parted with one of my fingers."

"You did right, however," ſaid Monimia coldly; "the gown you wanted, and the crown, I dare ſay, Mr. Orlando meant you ſhould uſe."

"I ſuppoſe he did, a dear ſweet creature! —Lord a mercy! what would I give to have a peep at his ſweet face this afternoon! I'll tell you what, Miſs, though you cannot go to church, nor I neither, we might ten to one ſee theſe gentlefolks ride by, if we could but ſteal up to the upper park, and ſo through the little common. 'Tis not much better than three miles, and we might not be miſs'd."

"No," ſaid Monimia drily, "I ſhall run no ſuch riſk indeed of making my aunt angry; and beſides, what would Mr. Somerive, or Mr. Orlando, or any other of them think if they ſaw us there?"

"Hang their thoughts!" replied Betty; "what would it ſignify to us what any body thought,

thought, if we pleaſed ourſelves? I'll go and ſee how the land lays, and if the two old girls have done their dinner, and are ſet down together to take their afternoon's doſe."

"Do not come back then, Betty," ſaid Monimia; "for I certainly will not go out without leave, and you know it nonſenſe to aſk it—therefore, if you like it, go; but I aſſure you I ſhall not."

Having thus releaſed herſelf from her importunate viſitor, Monimia ſat down to conſider all ſhe had told her. That Orlando ſhould quit the houſe without telling her, gave her at firſt extreme pain; yet a moment's reflection convinced her that, unleſs he had made a confidante of Betty, of which ſhe now ſaw all the danger, there was no poſſible way of his conveying to her intelligence of the ſudden ſummons he had received from his father; for Mrs. Lennard was at home, and had ſhut herſelf up in her own room to do twenty little ſervices which ſhe frequently choſe to have performed on

Sunday

Sunday mornings. A thouſand doubts now aroſe in the mind of Monimia, whether he would be able to call for her at night; a thouſand apprehenſions left the people he was with, particularly his uncle's daughters, who he had ſaid were very pretty women, ſhould eſtrange his thoughts from her, and rob her of his affections. Theſe fears were ſo acute, that ſhe was trying to drive them from her, when Betty returned, and, finding the door of her room faſtened, tapped ſoftly at it, and cried, "Miſs, miſs! who will refuſe to go into the park now?"

"You have not ſurely got leave!"

"No, nor I have not aſked it; but the old ladies are hard ſet in to their good things. Madam has had a gouty feel in her ſtomach all day, ſhe ſays, and that's always a ſymptom for a double doſe; and as to your aunt, ſhe has been ailing too, and will not flinch her ſhare, you know very well."

Monimia, alarmed at the loud whiſper, had opened the door before the end of this ſpeech, and let in her unwelcome compa-

nion, who now repeated, that every body was ſafely beſtowed who could interrupt them; and that, as it was ſtill very early, they might have a good chance of ſeeing ſome of theſe comers, and above all Orlando, in their evening ride. But Monimia, who was diſpleaſed with the familiar way in which the girl named Orlando, and knew that he would object to her walking with her, aſſumed a virtue when ſhe had it not; and though ſhe believed they might ſafely go the way ſhe propoſed, and return before the hour when it was likely her aunt would want her; though ſhe would have given half the world only for the chance of ſeeing Orlando at a diſtance, ſhe poſitively refuſed —and had the reſolution to ſee Betty ſet out by herſelf, with her new "moſt beautifullest" bonnet pinned under her petticoat, which ſhe propoſed putting on when ſhe got clear of the houſe; and then Monimia, forcing her attention from what had the laſt few hours engaged it, ſat down to the ſort of leſſon which Orlando had laſt marked

for

for her, and which ſhe had promiſed to make herſelf miſtreſs of before ſhe ſaw him again;—though, alas! while ſhe read, the idea of the ſuperior advantages enjoyed by the Miſs Woodfords, his couſins, their beauty, and the probability there was that one of them might be intended for him, too frequently diſtracted her thoughts, and impeded her good intentions.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

THE day had been unuſually warm; but towards evening a thunder-ſtorm came on, and, as it grew later, a tempeſt of wind, with heavy and continual rain.

Betty, ſulky that Monimia refuſed, and ſtill more ſulky that ſhe had got nothing by her long walk, but nearly ſpoiling all her finery, had not come to Monimia's room any more; but ſhe received, at the uſual hour, the uſual ſummons for tea. She thought both Mrs. Lennard and her aunt uncommonly peeviſh and tedious, and that the ſermon one was reading, while the other fell aſleep, was moſt unreaſonably long. At length ſhe was diſmiſſed, and, retiring to her turret, began to liſten to the wind, that howled in tremendous guſts among the trees,

trees, and to the rain falling in torrents, the ruſhing of which was redoubled by the leaden pipes that, from the roof of her turret, threw the water in columns on the pavement below. Would Orlando come? Through ſuch a tempeſt it were hardly to be wiſhed he ſhould. Having been abſent all day, there would be no fire in his room, he would be drenched with rain, and half dead with cold. Monimia then could not deſire he ſhould come; yet ſhe felt, in deſpite of her reaſon, that ſhe ſhould be very unhappy if he did not; for, though ſo many cauſes might combine to detain him, her humble ideas of herſelf, and the pictures ſhe had made of the beauty and attractions of the Miſs Woodfords, added another which rendered her wretched. "Alas!" cried ſhe, "Orlando, among them, will be too happy to think of me; and it is quite ridiculous to ſuppoſe, that he will quit theſe ladies to come through the ſtorm almoſt five miles to poor Monimia. No, no! Orlando will not come."

Still however ſhe could not determine to go to bed, at leaſt till the hour was paſt for which he had made the appointment. At the uſual time her aunt, who now frequently omitted to come herſelf, ſent Betty for her candle, and her door was locked as uſual, for that was a ceremony which either in perſon or proxy was always performed. But Monimia now no longer paſſed the long interval, between half after nine o'clock and the hour when Orlando uſually called her, in darkneſs; for he had furniſhed her with the means of procuring a light, and with ſmall wax candles. One of theſe ſhe now lit, and endeavoured to ſit down to read—but the violence of the wind, which ſhe fancied every moment increaſed, and the flaſhes of lightning which ſhe ſaw through her narrow caſement, to which there was no ſhutter, diſtracted her attention; and ſhe could only ſit in miſerable anxiety, liſtening to the various noiſes which in ſuch a tempeſtuous night are heard around an old building, and eſpecially ſuch a part of it as

ſhe inhabited; where, around the octagon tower or turret, the wind roared with violence from every point; while, in the long paſſages which led from thence to her aunt's apartments, it ſeemed yet more enraged, from being confined. She now traverſed her ſmall room with fearful ſteps; now ſat down on her bed, near the door, that ſhe might the more readily hear Orlando if he ſhould come; and now got on a chair, and opened her caſement to obſerve if there ſeemed any probability of the ſtorm's abating: but ſtill, though the thunder had ceaſed, the clouds, driven againſt each other by violent and varying guſts of wind, produced vivid flaſhes of lightning, which ſuddenly illuminated the whole park. But Orlando came not, and it was now near an hour paſt his uſual time. Again the poor anxious Monimia, now half deſpairing of his coming, and trying to perſuade herſelf that ſhe did not wiſh he ſhould come, traverſed her room, again went to her window. Another and another hour paſſed: amidſt the heavy

guſts and mournful howlings of the wind, ſhe had counted the clock, that, with a more than uſually hollow ſound, told twelve, one, two!—Orlando certainly did not mean to come—no! it was unreaſonable to ſuppoſe he would; unreaſonable to flatter herſelf that he would quit a cheerful circle of his relations, to traverſe the extenſive commons and lanes, and all the park, that lay between Weſt Wolverton and the Hall, in ſuch a night, when no perſon would think of going out but on life and death. Yet, while ſhe thus argued with herſelf, a few tears involuntarily ſtole from her eyes; and as ſhe gave up all hopes of his coming, and lay down in her clothes on her bed (for ſhe had not the reſolution to undreſs herſelf), ſhe ſighed deeply, and ſaid to herſelf: "And yet, if it had been me who was expected, I do not believe any ſtorm could have hindered me from trying to ſee Orlando! and I am ſure no company would.—Yet he is quite in the right, I know, and I do not blame him."

She

She could not, however fatigued and weary, close her eyes for some time. The clock at length struck three; and soon after, wearied with watching and anxiety, she fell into an unquiet repose.

Suddenly, without being conscious how long she had indulged it, she started from her sleep, and fancied she heard the well-known signal: she listened a moment; it was repeated. Trembling with joy, yet equally agitated by fear, she arose and answered it; and removing the impediments that were between them, and again lighting her candle, Orlando stepped into the room.

His clothes and his hair were streaming with water, and he said hastily, as he came through the hangings, "You had given me over, my Monimia, had you not?"—"Long ago," replied she, with an apprehensive countenance, which yet was lightened up with pleasure. "And now I am come, Monimia," reassumed he, "you must suffer me to remain here, for I cannot

get into my own room: the chapel doors, you know, are faſtened within ſide, and by the uſual way at this hour of the night it is impoſſible. I can ſtay but a moment; but I could not bear to be ſo many hours without ſeeing you; and beſides, I had no means of letting you know why I went ſo ſuddenly from hence, and I fear you have been unhappy."

"I ſhould have been unhappy indeed, if Betty, who heard it from the ſervant who came for you, had not told me as a piece of news, that company had arrived unexpectedly at Weſt Wolverton.—And in ſuch a night, Orlando, was it poſſible to expect you could leave them to come ſo far? How good it is of you!—And yet you will ſuffer, I fear, from your wet clothes. Good God! what can I do to prevent your ſuffering?"

"Be not uneaſy about that, my angel friend," replied Orlando; "ſuch trifles I never attend to, and never ſuffer from: if you will let me ſit down here with you, I will take off my great coat, and my other clothes

clothes are not ſo very wet. At this hour there will ſurely be nothing to apprehend from my ſtaying here."

"I hope not," ſaid Monimia, "I hope not, if we ſpeak low. The wind is ſo high, that any trifling noiſe could hardly be heard by my aunt if ſhe were upon the watch, which I hope ſhe is not." "You are generous to indulge me," anſwered Orlando; "and I muſt be a monſter to dream of injuring ſuch innocence and candour. But, Monimia, there are a thouſand uneaſy thoughts continually crowding upon me about you. This Betty Richards—I am afraid ſhe is a bad girl; I am ſure ſhe is an artful one; and there is an alliance of ſome ſort or other between her and the old butler: you will never truſt her, Monimia."

"Never indeed," replied Monimia; "for though ſhe is of late much thrown in my way ſince my aunt has become more indolent from her accident, I never willingly am with her; nor do I indeed like her ſo well as I uſed to do."

"Continue to keep yourſelf then from much intimacy, Monimia; for the converſation of ſuch a girl, to a mind pure and unſullied like yours, is to be dreaded. It is coarſe at leaſt, if not vicious; and, if it be not dangerous, is at all events improper. Diſcourage therefore her talking to you as much as you can, even about the tittle tattle of the houſe." Monimia moſt readily promiſed to obey him:—and then obſerving that he looked at her with a peculiar expreſſion of uneaſineſs in his countenance, ſhe ſaid, "But is that all, Orlando? Is there not ſomething elſe that gives you concern?" "Yes," replied he; "I will not conceal from you that there are many things. This wedding of my ſiſter's, though I moſt ſincerely rejoice that ſhe is likely to be happily ſettled, ſeems to teem with troubles for me."

Monimia turned pale, but only claſped her hands together as ſhe ſat by him, and did not interrupt him. He went on.

"My uncle Woodford piques himſelf extremely

extremely upon having brought about this marriage; for the father of the young man (a merchant at Corke in very great buſineſs) for ſome time poſitively refuſed his conſent, becauſe of Philippa's want of fortune. My uncle, you know, or rather you do not know, is juſt the reverſe of my mother, and is as buſtling and ſpirited as ſhe is mild and tranquil. Having got his money himſelf, he has no notion that any thing but money is worth thinking about, and that the money is beſt that is made in trade; and therefore, as he has only one ſon, who does not chooſe to take up his buſineſs, but is ſtudying at the Temple, he has adopted a notion, that it would be much better for me to go with him to London, and learn his buſineſs of a wine merchant, to which I may ſucceed."

"And marry one of your couſins," ſaid Monimia in a faint voice, "who are, you have told me, ſuch pretty women!" "If that is part of his plan," anſwered Orlando, "my Monimia, he has kept it to himſelf.—

But I do not believe it is, as one of them is engaged, and the other would not think me either ſmart enough or rich enough. Whatever may be Mr. Woodford's plan, however, that part of it will certainly never take effect; nor indeed will any of it, for I feel a total diſinclination to it."

"Why then are you ſo diſtreſt, Orlando, at the propoſal?"

"Becauſe I ſee it makes my father reſtleſs--not exactly the propoſal, ſo much as the converſation my uncle has held with him.—He has been declaiming againſt the folly of my dreaming away my time in waiting for a legacy from Mrs. Rayland; which after all, ſaid he, the whimſical old woman may not give him—and what if ſhe does? If ſhe acts as ſhe ought, the eſtate, you know, brother Somerive, ought to be your eldeſt ſon Phil's; and if ſhe gives the reſt of your family three or four thouſand pounds each, what will that do for your youngeſt ſon? Why, not give him ſalt to his porridge."

"Dear papa," ſaid Maria, "what an ex-

expreſſion!"—"Well, well, child," anſwered my uncle, "I can't ſtand to pick my words, when I am as anxious about a thing as I am about this—I ſay, and every man who knows the world will agree with me—I ſay, that a fine young fellow like my nephew here ought not to waſte his life nailed to the gouty chair of a peeviſh old woman, who ten to one dies and bilks him at laſt. Let him be put into ſome way of doing for himſelf—every man who knows the world will agree with me—let him be put into ſome way of doing for himſelf; and then, if Mrs. Rayland has a mind to be a friend to him, take my word for it ſhe'll do it ſo much the ſooner. I'm ſure of it, for I've remarked it in my dealings among mankind, and every man who knows the world will agree with me, that people are always more ready to help thoſe who are in a way of doing well, than thoſe that hang about helpleſs. If Orlando here was in a way of getting forward in the world, why you'd ſee that the old girl would be twice as kind

to him—or, if ſhe was not, why he need not ſo much care."

"I found," continued Orlando, "that this diſcourſe, though my father did not perfectly aſſent to the juſtice of all its arguments, made a deep impreſſion on his mind, which had long been diſturbed by the difficulty of finding for me ſome proper line of conduct for my future eſtabliſhment: and the determination is, that Mrs. Rayland is to be applied to for her opinion as to my ſiſter's marriage, by way of compliment; and in regard to me, by way of ſounding her intentions. It appears to me to be all very bad policy; and I foreſee nothing but vexation, perhaps my removal from hence."

Orlando pauſed a moment; and Monimia, with a deep and tremulous ſigh, repeated, "From hence! Alas! Orlando, I have foreſeen that the happineſs I have ſo little a while enjoyed of ſeeing you would not laſt long!"

"I know not," replied he. "I may be

too

too eaſily alarmed; but, with the buſtle and fuſs my uncle makes about every thing he purſues, he ſeldom fails of carrying his point; and he is now elated with his ſucceſs over the prudent and worldly-minded Mr. Fitz-Owen, and believes his interpoſition would every where prove as infallible as it has done in hurrying up this marriage for Philippa."

"Do you think it then too much hurried?" ſaid Monimia.

"I hardly know," replied he, "how to think it otherwiſe. Mr. Fitz-Owen is a very young man: he only ſaw Philippa half a dozen times when ſhe was in town laſt ſpring with my uncle; and he has inſiſted upon this match with as much vehemence as he could have done, had he known all her good qualities."

"That," ſaid Monimia, "is a very grave reflection. If Philippa has the good qualities of which the gentleman is ignorant, the diſcovery that beauty is her leaſt perfection will increaſe his happineſs."

"But

"But what does ſhe know of *him*, Monimia? What opportunity can ſhe have had to judge of a man with whom ſhe is engaged to paſs her life? Surely the acquaintance of a fortnight is very inſufficient to form her judgment of a character on which the happineſs of her whole life is to depend. Mr. Fitz-Owen may be a very good-tempered and worthy man; but, as he is the native of another country, it is impoſſible we ſhould know whether he is or no. However, I keep all theſe reflections to myſelf; for the affair is ſettled, and my father ſeems pleaſed with it. Philippa too ſeems to become attached to Mr. Fitz-Owen. There is ſomething very flattering to a young woman in the attention and perſeverance he has ſhewn. He has a good perſon, and ſhe really I believe likes him."

"But you do not, Orlando?"

"I do not diſlike him—I only wiſh I knew more of his temper; and I wiſh too that my buſtling buſy uncle had not contrived to connect my affairs with thoſe of

this

this wedding, and to hurry every thing with a precipitation that hardly gives one time to breathe. It was only on Thurſday evening that Fitz-Owen arrived from Dublin with his father's conſent: on Friday he delivered his credentials; and on Saturday the impetuous Mr. Woodford whirled him, with his own daughters and his officious ſelf, down to us, where he purſues his plan with the ſame vehemence; for he has already ſettled with my father, that the letter to Mrs. Rayland is to be written to-morrow, and on Wedneſday Philippa and Iſabella, and, if Mrs. Rayland conſents, I alſo, return with them to London," (Monimia ſhuddered, and checked an involuntary emotion ſhe felt to implore Heaven aloud that Mrs. Rayland might be inexorably averſe to this ſcheme) "where," continued Orlando, "the marriage is to take place as ſoon as the uſual forms can be gone through —Philippa is to ſet off to Ireland with her huſband, and Iſabella is to remain the winter with the Woodfords; my uncle being

ſure,

ſure, he ſays, of getting her married as well as he has done Philly."

"Alas! Orlando, you will go then: for Mrs. Rayland, however ſhe may diſlike ſuch a propoſal, will not, I am afraid, oppoſe it: there is ſomething ſo odd in her temper, that, though ſhe is offended if her advice is not aſked, ſhe will ſeldom give it when it is, eſpecially if ſhe believes any other perſon has been conſulted firſt."

"I underſtand her perfectly, my Monimia, and I ſee nothing but vexation gathering for me in every quarter. Alas! it is not one of the leaſt, that, while theſe people remain, my father expects me to ſtay at home; though, as my brother is ſo good as to promiſe to come thither to-morrow, I think I might be ſpared."

"And has your brother," ſaid Monimia, "been conſulted on this plan of your going into buſineſs with your uncle?"

"Oh, yes! It was opened to him after dinner, while I had left the room a moment to conſider by what means I could get to you;

you; and I found him eagerly promoting it for reaſons which I heartily forgive, while I thank God I feel myſelf incapable of harbouring ſuch ſentiments towards him, could we change ſituations. I muſt follow my deſtiny, Monimia, whatever it may be; for I muſt not make my poor father, and ſtill leſs my mother, unhappy. They have too many uneaſy hours about Philip; and while the marriage of Philippa gives them ſome ſatisfaction, it ſhall not be embittered by any oppoſition of mine to what they may think right for me—and yet I own, Monimia, I own, that to go with Mr. Woodford, to be confined to that ſort of buſineſs, would make me moſt completely wretched." He ſaid this in a tone of voice ſo expreſſive of deſpondence, that Monimia, oppreſſed as ſhe was before, could conceal the anguiſh ſhe felt no longer. Still, however, ſhe tried to check the exceſs of her ſorrow, while he tenderly ſoothed her, aſſuring her that, whatever might be his fate, he ſhould love her to the end of his life; and

and if he thought that the drudgery of a few years at any buſineſs, however irkſome to him, would enable him to paſs the reſt of his life in moderate competence with her, he would ſubmit to it, not only as a duty, but as a bleſſing. "And now, my Monimia, let us conſider how we can meet to-morrow night—by that time ſomething may more decidedly be known.—I will come then early in the morning, before this letter, of which I dread the event, is ſent; and, under pretence of enquiring how Mrs. Rayland does, and then of going into the ſtudy for ſome of my clothes, which I often leave there, I can open the chapel door, and prepare every thing for our going to the ſtudy the next evening; for to live without ſeeing you, Monimia, is impoſſible, and I fear to meet here often might be too hazardous."

"It would indeed," replied Monimia, "and even now I have been in miſery the whole time—Yet it was ſo late, Orlando, before you came!"

"It

"It was two o'clock before I could leave the company; for my uncle is a man who loves to ſit long over his wine, to tell what he thinks good ſtories, and calls for toaſts and ſongs, ſuffering nobody to quit the room as long as they can diſtinguiſh the glaſs from the candle. My father, very little uſed to this ſort of conviviality, was tired, and left us to manage him as we could. —My brother would have remained with him till now, I dare ſay, moſt willingly; but he had promiſed to be at Stockton's, with whom he now almoſt entirely lives, to a great hunting party this morning; and he daſhed through the rain about one o'clock. Fitz-Owen got extremely drunk, and was extremely noiſy; and I at length found there was no way for me to eſcape but by feigning to be in the ſame ſituation; by which ſtratagem I was at length releaſed, and flew, Monimia, with impatience to thee, dear ſource of all the happineſs I have, or ever hope to have, on earth!"

It

It was now ſo near the dawn of day, that Monimia beſought him to conſider the danger there was, if he ſtaid longer, of being obſerved in his departure by the labourers coming to their work. Orlando owned there was ſomething to fear, yet felt unuſually reluctant to go, and lingered till the break of day was very viſible through the caſement. He then tore himſelf away, and eſcaped from the turret without obſervation; but in croſſing the park he was ſeen at a diſtance by the footman, who was up on ſome ſcheme of his own. As great rewards were offered for the detection of poachers, and the fellow concluded Orlando to be one, he haſtily called one of the grooms; and they went round together to another part of the park, by which they thought this intruder muſt paſs; and, as Orlando was mounting the ſtile, he was amazed to find himſelf ſuddenly collared by one man, and rudely ſeized by the arm by another. His uncommon ſtrength and activity enabled him

him to diſengage himſelf inſtantly from both. They as inſtantly diſcovered their miſtake, and with a thouſand apologies returned to the houſe: but this unlucky rencounter was afterwards talked of in the family; and, though the conjectures to which it gave riſe were remote from the truth, they yet failed not to diſturb the tranquillity of the young lovers.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

MR. Somerive, after many debates with himſelf, and many conſultations with his wife, at length determined to write to Mrs. Rayland: it was indeed neceſſary to pay her the compliment of conſulting her on the marriage of his daughter; and he thought it not an improper opportunity to try what were her intentions in regard to Orlando, by hinting, that an occaſion now offered to eſtabliſh him advantageouſly in trade.

The arguments of Mr. Woodford had not on this point ſo much influence as to prevent his fearing the experiment he was about to make; but the conduct of his eldeſt ſon, which nothing could reſtrain, made him look forward with fear to the fu-

ture.

ture. He found his own health very much injured by the uneaſineſs he had lately undergone; and he knew that, ſhould he die, the only dependence of his wife and his unmarried daughters muſt be on Orlando, and on the friendſhip of Woodford. To put his ſon therefore into buſineſs with his wife's brother was certainly a very deſirable plan, if Mrs. Rayland did not intend better to provide for him; and it was certainly time to know whether ſhe had or had not any ſuch intentions in his favour.

The letter then which Orlando ſo dreaded, was written, after great precautions in chooſing the words. It requeſted her approbation of his eldeſt daughter's marriage with Mr. Fitz-Owen, the only ſon of an eminent merchant at Corke; and ſaid, that as Orlando was now of an age in which it became neceſſary to think of his future eſtabliſhment, thoughts were entertained of putting him into buſineſs with his uncle; but that nothing would be concluded upon without the entire approbation of Mrs. Rayland,

Rayland, to whoſe notice and protection he was ſo much obliged.

A ſervant was ſent with this letter about noon. It was received and read in due form, and a verbal meſſage returned, that Mrs. Rayland would at her leiſure write an anſwer, and ſend one of her own ſervants with it.

On this occaſion Mrs. Rayland talked to Lennard—not to conſult her, for it was an affair in which ſhe thought herſelf alone competent to judge—but to give vent to her ſpleen, and to expreſs her diſlike of all people in trade, and particularly of poor Mrs. Somerive. "Thoſe vulgar mundungus folks," ſaid ſhe, "will not ſuffer the family to better by their chance connection with a gentleman—let them marry their girls, if they will, to dealers and chapmen; I ſhall never interfere: they are all like the mother, and may make good tradeſmen's wives; though, if Mr. Somerive had not, like his fooliſh father, had a low taſte, his daughters might have married men of family,

mily, who would have been proud to be allied, though diſtantly, to ours. As it is, they muſt carry their cherry cheeks to a lower market—*I* ſhall never oppoſe it. But for Orlando, there was ſomething of an air of good blood about him, that almoſt made me doubt at times his birth by his mother's ſide. However, if he gets theſe buying and ſelling notions in his head, and chooſes his mother's low origin ſhould continue to be remembered, I have done. I ſuppoſe he's got among them—a fine flaſhy ſet of tradesfolks—and enters into their amuſements and views; and if ſo, *I* ſhall never diſturb him, let him go his own way; only I ſhall not chooſe to have a ſhopkeeper an inmate at Rayland Hall."

Monimia, who was called down a moment before to aſſiſt in cutting out linen, was preſent during this harangue, for they conſidered her as a mere cypher. She found herſelf terribly affected by the opening of it; but when it proceeded to ſpeak of Orlando, ſhe meaſured four times in-

ſtead of two, notched a piece of Iriſh cloth in the wrong place, and was beginning to uſe her ſciſſars the wrong way, when a ſevere look from Mrs. Lennard, who ſnatched it out of her hand, with "What are you about, mope?" reſtored her to her recollection. She begged pardon; and another look from her aunt bade her beware that ſhe did not offend a ſecond time—when Mrs. Rayland thus went on:

"After a taſte for *ſuch* company, this place muſt be very dull: drinking and jollity, I ſuppoſe, are ſoon learned. And ſo Mr. Orlando has not been here theſe two days! Mighty well; he is his own maſter—Lennard! he has not called this morning, has he?"

Monimia, by a glance of her eye, ſaw him at that moment penſively and dejectedly croſſing the park on foot. She dared not however ſay ſo; but finding herſelf quite unequal to the miſery of being preſent at an interview, in which ſhe foreſaw that, in conſequence of this fatal letter, he would

would be forbidden the houſe, and ſeeing that her aunt determined ſhe *ſhould* ſtay, ſhe hung her foot as if by accident in the long roll of linen that was on the ground, and, in pretending to diſengage it, fell with ſome violence againſt an old heavy gilt leather ſcreen that went acroſs one ſide of the large room, and ran the ſharp-pointed ſciſſars, with which ſhe was cutting the linen, into her arm a little above the wriſt.

Her aunt, however, did not perceive it, till the blood ſtreamed from her arm, round which, without any complaint, ſhe wrapped her handkerchief. The paleneſs and faintneſs, which ſhe could not diſguiſe, were accounted for when Mrs. Lennard ſaw the handkerchief bathed in blood. Monimia, who was actually ſinking to the earth, though not from the wound, was then diſmiſſed, while Betty was called to take care of the careleſs girl, and ordered to put ſome friar's balſam to the cut; and ſhe juſt tottered out of one door as Orlando, after ſending up

for permiſſion, entered at the other. This was fortunate; for, had he beheld her in ſuch a ſituation, and had ſhe at that moment ſeen him, their intelligence could hardly have been concealed. The looks Mrs. Lennard had caſt on her, when ſhe firſt appeared confuſed, had impreſſed her with terror, and, ſhe fancied, menaced all that was dreadful. With difficulty, and leaning on Betty's arm, ſhe reached her turret; where, under pretence that the accident of having hurt her arm had turned her ſick, ſhe begged a glaſs of water, and lay down, being otherwiſe unable to conceal from Betty the agitation of her ſpirits, and the terror ſhe was in for the reception of Orlando.

Mrs. Rayland, inſtead of the kindneſs ſhe was uſed to ſhew him, now received him with the moſt cold and repulſive formality. "Your ſervant, Mr. Orlando—Pleaſe to take a chair," was all ſhe ſaid; and in the manner of her ſaying it, Orlando ſaw abundant cauſe to fear that his father's

ther's letter had undone him with Mrs. Rayland.

"I find we are to loſe you, Sir!—— you are going to turn merchant, or ſhop-keeper!"

"Not, Madam," replied Orlando, "if you think my doing ſo a wrong meaſure."

"Oh! Sir, I never pretend to dictate. Every one knows their own affairs beſt; and by all means *you* ought to follow your father's orders and your own inclinations."

"Alas, dear Madam!" replied Orlando, with a ſort of ſpirited humility that well became him, "my father's orders would, I believe, in this caſe be given with reluctance; and though *I* ſhould obey them, it would be with reluctance indeed!"

"What, Sir! (relaxing a little of her vinegar aſpect) is it not your own deſire then that you ſhould be put apprentice or journeyman to this perſon, this brother of your mother's? I thought, for my part, that finding perhaps, like your brother and other gay

young men, that the country was very dull, you choſe probably to figure in London; for it is trades-people now that can beſt afford to ſhew away, as witneſs the new comers at poor Lord Carloraine's fine place —thoſe what d'ye callums—they were trades-people—yet nobody can attempt to live as they do. If ſuch things can be done by trade, no wonder young men are eager to begin. The Hall, Mr. Orlando, muſt be a dull place, when once you have got theſe fine doings in your head."

"Madam," ſaid Orlando trembling, for he now found that his fate depended on the event of this dialogue—"Madam, I have always avoided the meanneſs of adulation, nor will I uſe it now; you ought to deſpiſe me if I did; and I know you have generoſity enough to have beſtowed all the favours I have received from you, without expecting me to ſacrifice my integrity or my freedom."

Mrs. Rayland did not very clearly comprehend this ſentence. It was partly complimentary,

plimentary, and therefore to her taſte; but the words *ſacrifice* and *freedom*, at the end, on which a ſtrong emphaſis was laid, ſounded a little like rebellion. She therefore ſcrewed up her viſage to its former aſperity, and anſwered, "No, indeed, Sir, *I* expect no ſacrifices from any body; and as to freedom—every body is free to do as they like beſt in their own affairs, as I told you before."

"You will not then, Madam, ſuſpect me of meanneſs unworthy equally of my reſpect for you and what I owe myſelf, if I declare to you, that I have no wiſh to enter into trade, for which I am very certain I have no talents; and that, though I muſt obey my father if he inſiſts upon it, yet I ſhall be very unhappy, and had rather, infinitely rather, if you will have the goodneſs to permit it, remain at home, with the advantage of being allowed ſometimes, in paying my reſpects to you, to have, as I have had for ſome months, the uſe of your library; where I hope I am qualifying my-

ſelf for one of the liberal profeſſions againſt the time when my father can find an opportunity to place me in one: and in the mean time I call God to witneſs, that to aſſociate with ſuch people as Mr. Stockton, or to emulate his ſplendour, is ſo far from being my wiſh, that to be compelled to do it would be the greateſt puniſhment that could be inflicted upon me."

"I believe, couſin Orlando, I believe—and I am pleaſed to ſee it—you have ſome underſtanding; and indeed, young man, I think too well of you to wiſh to ſee you a tradeſman." "Couſin Orlando," were, he well knew, words that always portended good humour, and were never uſed but on days of high favour. They now ſounded moſt ſoothingly in the ears of Orlando.—"Will you then, Madam, be ſo very good, when you take the trouble to anſwer my father's letter, to expreſs your ſentiments on this matter? and I am ſure he will then preſs it no farther."

"I ſhall tell him, child," replied ſhe,

"that

"that I think you may do better; and for the preſent, as you are not idle, that you may go on with your ſtudies at the Hall."

Orlando, in raptures at having carried his point, thanked his venerable couſin a thouſand times. He never thought her ſo reaſonable before: ſhe never fancied him ſo much like her grandfather Sir Orlando; and ſo many civilities paſſed between them, that, before they parted, ſhe gave him a bank-note of ten pounds, and he was admitted to the honour of kiſſing her hands. In this excellent humour, which Mrs. Lennard did not diſcourage, he left her, went into the ſtudy to ſecure his admittance in the evening, and to recover himſelf of the extreme perturbation he was in, before he returned to the party with whom he was to dine at home.

Mrs. Rayland then, having called for her writing materials, which ſeldom ſaw the ſun, and being placed in form at her roſe-wood writing-box, lined with green velvet and mounted in ſilver, produced, at the end of

four hours, the following letter, piquing herſelf on ſpelling as her father ſpelt, and diſdaining thoſe idle novelties by which a few ſuperfluous letters are ſaved.

Raylande Hall, 12th day of September, A. D. 1776.

"Sir, my kinſman,

"I HAVE received youre letter, and am oblidged by youre taking the troubbel to informe me of youre famely affaires, to the wich I am a ſinceer goode wiſher. In reſpecte to youre daughter Philippa muſt begge to be excuſed from givving my oppinion, not haveing the pleaſure to knowe the gentlemen, and being from my retired life no judge of the perſonnes charractere, who are remote and in biſneſs, as I underſtande this perſonne is; wherefore I can onelye there upon ſaie, that doubtleſſe you, being as you are a goode and carefulle father, will take due care and precaution that youre daughtere ſhall not, by her marriage, be expoſed to the miſchances of becoming reduced

reduced by bankruptcies and other accidents, whereby peopel in trade are oft times grate ſufferers.—But your care herein for your daughter's ſecuritye is not to be queſtionned. Furthermore, reſpecting youre youngeſt ſonne, Mr. Orlando, he is very certainelye at youre diſpoſal alſo, and you are, it may be, the moſt competent judge of that which is fitting to bee done for his future goode and advantage. I wiſh him very well; he ſeeming to me to be a ſober, promiſing, and well-conditioned youthe; and ſuch a one as, were I his neerer relation, I ſhoulde thinke a pitye to put to a trade. I am at preſent alwaies glad of his companie at the Hall, and willinge to give anye littel encourragement to his deſier of learninge in the liberal ſciences fitting for a gentleman, the wich his entring on a ſhoppe or warehouſe would diſtroye and put an ende to. However that maye bee, I ſaie again, that you, being his father, are to be ſure the proppereſt perſonne to determine for him, and he is dutiefullie inclined, and willinge

to obey you. Yet by the diſcourſe I have had with him there-uponne, it doth not appeare that the youthe himſelf is inclined to become a dealer, as you purpoſe.

"Heartilie recommending you in my prayers to the Diſpoſer of all goode giftes, and hoping he will directe you in all thinges for the well-doing of your famely, I remaine,

Sir, my kinſman,
youre well-wiſher
and humbel ſervant,
GRACE RAYLANDE."

This letter was received at Wolverton while Mr. Somerive, his two ſons, Mr. Woodford and Mr. Fitz-Owen were yet over their wine. The anxious father opened it with a palpitating heart, nor were the younger part of the audience leſs ſolicitous to know its contents. As there were none of them towards whom ſecrecy was abſolutely neceſſary, though it might have been more prudent, Mr. Somerive, at the requeſt of his eldeſt ſon, put it acroſs the table to him—

him—who, with that thoughtleſs indiſcretion which marked his character, read it aloud, with comments ſerving to turn into ridicule the writer, and the ſentiments it contained. The deſcription of Orlando—under that of a ſober, promiſing, and well-conditioned youth—was read with a burſt of laughter; while the ſlighting way in which trade was mentioned, and the contempt thrown on ſhopkeepers, under which Mrs. Rayland ſeemed to deſcribe wine-merchants and every perſon in buſineſs, raiſed the indignation of Mr. Woodford and Mr. Fitz-Owen, who both agreed in declaring that the opinion of ſuch an old crone was not worth conſulting; that ſhe was in a perfect dotage, as well from pride as old age; and that it was a condeſcenſion in Mr. Somerive to have conſulted her at all. Orlando, however, ſaw all this with concern mingled with joy. He was pretty ſure, from the countenance of his father, which he ſolicitouſly watched as he peruſed the letter, that the part of it which related to himſelf was kinder than he

expected; that it had turned the fluctuating and undecided opinion of his father in his favour; and that he ſhould not now, by being ſent with his uncle Woodford, be condemned to the double miſery of quitting Monimia, and aſſociating with perſons whoſe manners and ideas were ſo different from his own, that it was a perpetual puniſhment to him to be in their company. The diſpleaſure of his brother at the partiality Mrs. Rayland expreſſed for him was eaſily accounted for; and Orlando had long accuſtomed himſelf to bear his rough jokes, and even his ſarcaſtic reproaches, which he vented whenever they met, without much uneaſineſs.

As ſoon as Mr. Somerive could diſengage himſelf from his company, he withdrew to conſult with his wife on the purport of Mrs. Rayland's letter, and made a ſign to Orlando to follow him in a few moments. —He did ſo, and found his father and mother in conſultation in the garden. The mother, whoſe heart was half broken at the

idea

idea of parting with her daughter ſo ſuddenly, was weeping with joy to find that Orlando would not yet leave her: flattering herſelf, from the purport of the letter, that the affluent fortune of Mrs. Rayland would at laſt centre with Orlando, and putting the moſt favourable conſtruction on every expreſſion that related to him, ſhe agreed with Mr. Somerive, that nothing would be ſo imprudent as to think of removing him; and it was even determined, that Mr. Somerive ſhould that evening write to her again, thanking her for her advice about his daughter, and leaving the future fate of Orlando wholly to her diſpoſal; that Orlando ſhould himſelf carry the letter, and aſk leave to take his former apartments for ſome time—only returning once again to Wolverton to take leave of his eldeſt ſiſter, whom he was to ſee no more before ſhe went to Ireland—and of his ſecond ſiſter Iſabella, who was to accompany her to London, and to paſs ſome time with her uncle and aunt Woodford.

Never

Never did Orlando obey his father with more alacrity than on this occaſion; and on his return Mrs. Rayland never received him more kindly. He was now again invited to partake of her ſupper: without putting much force on himſelf, he ſhewed her exactly that ſort of attention which was the moſt agreeable to her, and appeared grateful without being ſervile. At length he was diſmiſſed; and, when the houſe was perfectly quiet, he flew to Monimia, who accompanied him to the ſtudy; and when he related how much more happily the events of the day had paſſed than he had at its beginning expected, ſhe ſhed tears of delight; and the ſweet ſenſations of hope, which they now dared to indulge more than there ever yet appeared reaſon to indulge them, made this one of the happieſt evenings they had ever paſſed together.

The following day Orlando returned to the houſe of his father, and found that, in regard to ſome parts of his family, a new arrangement had taken place. Mrs. Somerive,

rive, as the hour approached for her two eldeſt daughters to leave her—one to be ſeparated from her perhaps for years, and to enter into another family—found herſelf ſo much affected, that her huſband, who was very indulgent to her, agreed ſhe ſhould accompany the party to London, be preſent at the wedding of her daughter, and return in a fortnight, bringing Iſabella back with her, if the idea of leaving her was at the end of that time uneaſy to her. This being ſettled, Orlando took leave of his mother and ſiſters that evening: the former rejoicing that he would remain in the country; and the latter, but particularly the eldeſt, lamenting their ſeparation with many tears: for Orlando, who was tenderly attentive to his ſiſters, was fondly beloved by them all; though to Selina, the third, who was a year younger than himſelf, he was more attached than to the reſt.

Penſively he returned back to the Hall after this melancholy parting: it was the firſt time the family had been thus ſeparated;

ed; for, except the unhappy eccentricities of his eldeſt ſon, the union of Mr. Somerive's children, and the promiſe they all gave of excellence, had hitherto made him amends for much of the difficulty he found in ſupporting them. But Orlando ſaw that the hour was now come when his father felt equal pain for the fate of thoſe who were about to be what is called eſtabliſhed in the world, and for thoſe whom he knew not how to eſtabliſh, or, in caſe of his death, to provide for. All that filial tenderneſs and good ſenſe could ſuggeſt to his ingenuous and generous mind, he ſaid to conſole his father; but with infinite concern he obſerved, that the wounds inflicted by the profligacy of his brother feſtered more deeply every day, and that all he could do had too little power to aſſuage the conſtant pain ariſing from this ſource; from which, though his father did not complain, Orlando thought it but too evident that his health was gradually impaired.

Againſt the uneaſineſs theſe obſervations gave

gave him he found the only reſpite in his books, to which he aſſiduouſly applied himſelf—and in his evening conferences with Monimia, who every hour became more dear to him, and whoſe perſonal charms ſeemed every hour heightened by the progreſs of her underſtanding. As the nights became longer, and more obſcure, they met earlier, and with leſs apprehenſion of detection; and as Mrs. Lennard ſeemed to become more and more remiſs in her office of duenna, the opportunities they had of ſeeing each other in the courſe of the day (though they rarely ventured to hold any converſation) ſweetened the tedious hours between their meetings.

Thus almoſt a fortnight paſſed after the departure of Mrs. Somerive and her daughters for London; Orlando remaining conſtantly at the Hall, except dining occaſionally with his father, or riding over in a morning to enquire after him, Mrs. Rayland ſeeming every day more fond of his company; and every body about the houſe,

even

even the old ſervants, who had hitherto had ſuch an aſcendency, appearing to conſider him as the future maſter of the domain, where he was now inveſted with powers he had never before enjoyed. The game-keeper was ordered to ſuffer no other perſon to have the liberty of ſhooting on the extenſive manors; and Mrs. Rayland was pleaſed when the game that was brought to her table was killed by Orlando; while, whatever diminution of conſequence the confidential ſervants might ſuffer by this growing fondneſs of their miſtreſs for him, there was ſomething in his manner ſo faſcinating, that their jealouſy and anger were inſenſibly converted into attachment; and all, even the auſtere Mrs. Lennard herſelf, ſeemed to wiſh him well; except Mr. Pattenſon, who, in proportion as he became in favour with others, appeared to diſlike him. —Orlando had ſome time before remarked his rudeneſs, and often fancied that he watched him, and had ſome ſuſpicion of his evening converſations with Monimia—

yet

yet if he had, it was more likely he would ſpeak of what he knew, than ſecretly reſent what he had in fact nothing to do with: but ſome reſentment he appeared to harbour; and, whenever he met Orlando, ſurveyed him with looks which expreſſed anger, ſcorn, and apprehenſion. Orlando, conſcious of never having injured him, and fearful only in one point, endeavoured to guard againſt any miſchief he could do by diſcovering his evening viſits to the turret, or thoſe of Monimia to the library; and, for the reſt, deſpiſed his wrath too much to attempt appeaſing or reſenting it.

Mrs. Lennard, to whom the conſtant reſidence of Orlando at the Hall might be ſuppoſed to be diſagreeable, was much more civil to him, now that he was a fine young man, than ever ſhe had been during his childhood: to her he was always extremely obliging; and though he diſdained to ſtoop to the meanneſs of flattering Mrs. Rayland, where money might be ſuppoſed to be his ſole object, he did not think

think it equally unworthy to uſe a little art to promote the intereſt of his love. Mrs. Lennard was remarkably open to two ſorts of adulation—She loved to be thought a woman of ſenſe, and to hear how fine her perſon muſt have been in her younger days. She was even now accuſtomed to ſay, that though not ſo well to *meet*, ſhe was ſtill well to *follow*; for ſhe fancied her tall perpendicular figure exhibited ſtill a great deal of dignity and grace. Theſe foibles were ſo evident, and whenever ſhe was not with Mrs. Rayland ſhe took ſo little pains to conceal them, that Orlando, who thought it too probable that on her the future happineſs of his life depended, believed it not wrong to take advantage of them to acquire her favour; and he ſucceeded ſo well by adroitly adminiſtering now and then a little well-timed flattery, that Mrs. Lennard not only held him in high eſteem, but endeavoured to ſecure his, by cultivating the graces he had remarked. She entered on a new courſe of reading, and a little modernifed her

her appearance. To have made too many and too rapid improvements in the latter reſpect, would have been attended with the hazard of diſpleaſing Mrs. Rayland; hers therefore were confined to that ſort of emendations which ſhe was not likely to perceive.

It happened that, in the progreſs of theſe refinements, Mrs. Lennard had occaſion for ſome articles which Betty Richards (who was a very great favourite, from the aſſiduity which ſhe affected in her ſervice particularly) was commiſſioned to buy. The place ſhe was to go to was rather a large village than a town, and was about three miles and a half from the Hall; the way to it leading partly through the park, and partly through ſome hanging woods and coppices which belonged to Mrs. Rayland. Monimia happened to be in the room when Mrs. Lennard was giving Betty this commiſſion for the next morning; and as her aunt had promiſed her a few articles for herſelf, for which ſhe had immediate occaſion, ſhe ventured to ſolicit leave

to go with Betty to make theſe purchaſes. Dear Madam," ſaid ſhe, "do indulge me this once. I have hardly been out of the park twice in my life; and though I have no deſire to go any where when you diſapprove of it, ſurely there can be no harm in my walking to ſuch a place with Betty, juſt to buy what you are ſo good as to allow me. We ſhall not be gone above two hours and a half, for I will go as early as you pleaſe in the morning."

Mrs. Lennard, who happened to be in a better humour than uſual when this requeſt was made, agreed to it under ſome reſtrictions. She ſaid, that if Monimia *did* go, ſhe muſt be back by nine o'clock at the very lateſt, and not go into any houſe but that of the univerſal dealer with whom her buſineſs was; that ſhe muſt make no acquaintance, and enter into converſation with nobody. To all this Monimia moſt willingly agreed; and ſhe believed that Orlando, whom ſhe determined to conſult in the evening, would not object to her going,

on

on ſuch an occaſion, ſo little a way, whatever diſlike he had to her aſſociating much with Betty.

To Orlando, therefore, ſhe communicated her deſign as ſoon as they met, who did not ſeem much pleaſed with it; but to a matter apparently ſo trifling he was aſhamed of making any ſerious oppoſition, when ſhe ſaid that ſhe really wanted the articles her aunt had given her leave to buy, which no other opportunity might afford her. He therefore, after expreſſing his hopes that ſhe would continue upon her guard againſt Betty, whom he told her he ſaw more and more cauſe to miſtruſt and diſlike, conſented to the little expedition ſhe meditated, and directed her the neareſt way through the woods and the preſerved pheaſant-grounds of Mrs. Rayland. "I ſhall be out with my gun to-morrow," ſaid he; "but I ſuppoſe I muſt not venture to meet you as if it were by chance?"

"I think," anſwered Monimia, "you had better not. Were we to meet, it would

perhaps look like deſign; and as we could not venture to enter into converſation, it is hardly worth the riſk of Betty's talking about it, ſince we ſhould only juſt paſs each other in the woods."

"I believe," replied Orlando, "it will be better not; eſpecially as I told Mrs. Rayland at dinner yeſterday, and while your aunt was preſent, that I ſhould walk with my gun to my father's, and try round his lands for ſome game to ſend up to my mother and ſiſter."

Mrs. Lennard had probably recollected this circumſtance when ſhe ſo eaſily gave Monimia the permiſſion ſhe aſked, her walk lying quite on the oppoſite ſide of the country. It was agreed, therefore, that Orlando ſhould not incur any ſuſpicion of a correſpondence between them, by changing his plan for the next day; and after that was ſettled, Orlando read to her a letter he had that day received from his mother. It related the marriage of Philippa, and her immediate departure for Ireland—

deſcribed the ſtate of her own mind on bidding adieu to her daughter—and ſaid, that Mr. Woodford had inſiſted on her ſtaying another week in town to recover her ſpirits; which however ſhe ſhould rather do to indulge Iſabella, who had never been in town before, with the ſight of the playhouſes and other public places; for that *her* own ſpirits would be infinitely more relieved by collecting around her the reſt of her children. "But," added ſhe, while a tear had bliſtered the paper where the ſentence was written, "why do I thus fondly flatter myſelf, and forget that your brother, my Orlando, is almoſt a ſtranger to us, and is, I much fear, by his thoughtleſs conduct, ſlowly deſtroying the invaluable life of your dear father? Alas! while I remember this, I know not how I ſhould ſupport myſelf if I did not find comfort in thinking of you."

Orlando's tears, while he read this letter, fell where the paper was marked by thoſe of this beloved parent. The delightful viſions he had been indulging but the moment

before, diſappeared; and he hardly dared think of Monimia, if it muſt be at the expence of wounding the peace and deſtroying the hopes of his parents. One look, however, from her, the ſound of her voice as ſhe ſoothingly ſpoke of his mother, diſſipated theſe mournful thoughts; and, as he led her to her turret, he fancied that, if his mother could ſee her, ſhe would love her as much as he did, and be happy to add to the family ſhe wiſhed to collect around her, ſo amiable and intereſting a creature.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

EARLY on the following morning, Monimia, awaking from her ſhort repoſe, prepared herſelf for her little journey, which, unuſed as ſhe was to go farther than about the park or in the walled gardens, was to her an event of ſome importance. The beſt dreſs ſhe had was a white gown, which ſhe put on to make her appearance in the village, with a little ſtraw hat tied under her chin with blue ribband. Her fine hair, which ſhe had never attempted to diſtort with irons, or change by powder, was arranged only by the hands of nature; and a black gauze handkerchief, which her aunt had given her from her own wardrobe, was tied over her ſhoulders. Nothing could be more ſimple than her whole ap-

pearance; but nothing could conceal the beautiful ſymmetry of her figure, or leſſen the grace which accompanied her motions. Her companion Betty, as eager as ſhe was for the walk, entered her room before ſhe was quite ready, dreſſed in all the finery ſhe dared ſhew at home, while ſhe reſerved her moſt ſplendid ornaments to put on at the park-ſtile, and to be reſtored to her pocket at the ſame place on their return.

It was a clear morning in the middle of October when they ſet out. They happily executed their commiſſions; but Betty had ſo much to ſay, ſo many things to look at, and ſo many wiſhes for the pretty things ſhe ſaw—and the man and his wife, who kept the ſhop, were ſo glad to ſee the *ladies*, as they called them both, and ſo willing to ſhew all the neweſt things from the next provincial town, as very faſhionable, and preſſed them ſo earneſtly to go into their parlour, and eat ſome cake and drink ſome of their currant wine, that Betty had quite forgot Mrs. Lennard's injunc-

tion

tion to return at nine o'clock; nor could the repeated remonſtrances of Monimia prevail upon her to leave the houſe till the clock ſtruck eleven. Monimia, very much alarmed, and fearing that her aunt would, in conſequence of this diſobedience, never allow her to go out again, then prevailed upon her companion to ſet out; and to ſave as much time as they could, they walked as faſt as poſſible up the path which led from the village, through a copſe that clothed the ſteep acclivity of a hill, which, at the end of about three quarters of a mile, led to Mrs. Rayland's woods. They paſſed with equal ſpeed through the firſt of theſe woods, the path ſtill aſcending; but when they came to the ſecond, Monimia, from unuſual exertion, from the heat (for the ſun had yet great power and force), and the apprehenſions of her aunt's anger, was quite exhauſted, and begged Betty to let her reſt a moment on the ſteps of the ſtile; to which ſhe, who feared Mrs. Lennard's diſpleaſure much leſs than Monimia, readily aſſented.

"Lord, Miſs," cried ſhe, as they ſat down, "how frighted you be at nothing! Why, what can your aunt do, child? She can't kill you; and as for a few angry words, I've no notion of minding 'em, not I: 'tis hard indeed if one's to be always a ſlave, and never dares to ſtir ever ſo little; —one might as well be a negur."

"I would not for the world," anſwered Monimia, "offend my aunt when ſhe is kind to me; and it was very good in her to give me money to buy theſe things, and to let me go for them."

"I ſee no mighty matter of goodneſs in it," cried the other: "who is to provide for you, if ſhe does not, who is your own natural relation? Egollys! Miſs, if I was you, I ſhould be very apt to ſhew her the difference. Why, very often ſhe uſes you like a dog, and I'm ſure ſhe makes you work like a ſervant. There's Mr. Pattenſon always a-telling me, that handſome girls have no occaſion to be drudges as I be, or as I have been; for that in London they may make

their

their fortunes, and live like the fineſt ladies of the land." Thus ſhe ran on, while Monimia, hardly hearing, and not at all attending to her converſation, ſat ſilent, conſidering how extraordinary Orlando would think it, if by any accident he ſhould know ſhe was out ſo long—and trying to recover her breath that they might proceed—when ſuddenly ſeveral ſpaniels ran out of the wood, a pheaſant flew up near them, and the report of two guns was heard ſo near, that Monimia ſtarted in ſome degree of terror; while Betty, whoſe nerves were much ſtronger, clapped her hands, and, laughing aloud, cried: "Oh jingo! if here ben't ſome gentlemen ſhooting—let's ſtay and ſee who they be!"

"No, no!" ſaid Monimia, "let us go."

She then aroſe to walk on; but the voices of the perſons who were ſhooting were now heard immediately before them, and ſhe turned pale when ſhe thought ſhe diſtinguiſhed that of Orlando. Inſtantaneouſly, however, the ſportſmen broke out of

the thick underwood into the path before them, and Monimia beheld a young man, whom, from his diſtant reſemblance to Orlando, ſhe immediately knew to be his elder brother. With him were two other gentlemen, and a ſervant who carried their nets. "Oh ho!" cried the elder Somerive; "what have we here! two curſed pretty wenches—hey, Stockton? Here's a brace of birds that it may be worth while to mark, damme!" He then approached Monimia, who ſhrunk back terrified behind her companion; while Betty, far from feeling any apprehenſion, advanced with a curtſey and a giggle, and "Pray, Sir, let us paſs."

"Not ſo quickly, my little dear," ſaid Mr. Stockton; "I am a new comer into this country, and have a great inclination to be acquainted with all my pretty neighbours—By Heaven, you are as handſome as an angel—Pray, my dear, where do you live?"

"With Mrs. Rayland, Sir," ſaid Betty, dropping

dropping another curtſey; "and I beg your honour will not ſtop us, for my Lady will be very angry."

"Damn her anger," cried Stockton; "does ſhe think to ſhut up all the beauty in the country in her old fortification? If ſhe's angry, you pretty little rogue, leave her to vent it on her jolly favourite butler, that fellow who looks like the confeſſor to the convent, and do you come to me—I keep open houſe for the reception of all pretty damſels in diſtreſs—and bring your companion here with you."

He then looked forward towards Monimia, and ſaw her in an agony of tears; for the converſation of Philip Somerive and his companion, to whom he gave the title of Sir John, had terrified her ſo much that ſhe could no longer command herſelf.—"Why, what the devil's the matter?" cried Stockton. "Why, Sir John—why, Somerive, what have you ſaid to that ſweet girl?"

"We've been aſking her who ſhe is, replied Sir John; "and it ſeems ſhe does not know."

"You are the houſekeeper's niece, are you not?" ſaid Somerive.

"Tell me, my dear," addreſſing himſelf to Betty, "is not this little ſimpleton, that falls a-crying ſo prettily, the reputed niece of that old formal piece of hypocriſy, Lennard? Come, tell us—you have more ſenſe than to cry becauſe one aſks a civil queſtion."

"Lord, Sir," replied Betty, "to be ſure you are ſuch another wild gentleman that I don't at all wonder you've frighted our Miſs, who, poor thing! has ſcarcely ever been out of our houſe all her life.——Yes, Sir, 'tis Miſs Monimee, Sir, Madam Lennard's kinſwoman; and I hope, Sir, you'll pleaſe to give us leave to paſs, for we ſhall have a deal of anger for being out ſo much longer than Madam Lennard ſhe gived us leave to ſtay."

"Tell

"Tell us then," ſaid Sir John, taking both Monimia's hands, which ſhe in vain endeavoured to diſengage from his graſp—"tell us where and when we can ſee you again, and then you ſhall go."—"Yes," cried Stockton, addreſſing himſelf to Betty, "tell us, my dear girl, when can we ſee you again?" "We ſhall not eaſily relinquiſh the acquaintance," interrupted Somerive; "and if you are to be met with only at the Hall, I ſhall contrive to get into favour again with that immortal old frump, and I can tell you that's no ſmall compliment."

"Oh! dear Sir," giggled Betty, "I vow and declare you put me all in a twitter with your wild ways. Indeed, Sir, you can't ſee us no where; for, as to Miſs, ſhe never goes out, not at all.—For my ſhare, to be ſure, I now and tan be at church, and ſuch like; but for all that, it's morally impoſſible for us to ſee you nohow at all."

"Well then," cried Stockton, "we'll have a kiſs a-piece ſomehow at all, now we do ſee you."

"Yes,

"Yes, yes," ſaid Somerive, "that we will."

"Well, gentlemen," replied Betty, "I am ſure this is very rude behaviour (Lord, Miſs, why d'ye cry ſo? I warrant they won't do no harm); and if you inſiſt upon it, I hope you'll let us go then."

"Yes," anſwered Somerive, "we'll let you go then."

Betty went through the ceremony without making many difficulties; but when Stockton advanced towards Monimia, to whom Sir John had all this time been making profeſſions of violent love, ſhe retreated from him; and her alarm was ſo evidently unaffected that Sir John ſtopped him.—"Don't, Stockton," cried he; "Miſs is apparently very new to the world, and we have diſtreſſed her." "Well, well," anſwered Stockton, "we won't diſtreſs her then. Come, Somerive, we ſhall meet theſe charming girls ſome other time; I ſee you are taking care of that," for he continued whiſpering Betty; "ſo let us

now

now go on to beat the wood." Somerive, who ſeemed to have made, during his momentary converſation, ſome arrangement with Betty, now agreed to this; and, as he paſſed Monimia, looked earneſtly under her hat, and ſaid in a half whiſper, "Upon my honour! that ſober well-conditioned young man, Mr. Orlando, has a fine time of it—theſe are his ſtudies at the Hall!" Poor Monimia, ſinking with terror and confuſion, now endeavoured to diſengage herſelf from Sir John, and to follow Betty, who, making more half curtſeys, and looking ſmilingly after the gentlemen, was walking on; but he, who had attached himſelf to Monimia, was not ſo eaſily ſhaken off. He told Stockton and Somerive, that he ſhould go home another way, and ſhould ſhoot no more. "Good morrow, therefore," added he, "I ſhall wait upon theſe ladies through the woods; and as you do not want Ned (ſpeaking of his ſervant), he may as well go with me and take home the birds." To this the other

two

two aſſenting departed; while Sir John, giving his ſervant a hint to enter into converſation with Betty, and diſcover as much as he could relative to Monimia, again joined her, though ſhe had walked forward as quickly as poſſible, and deſired her, as he ſaid ſhe ſeemed tired, to accept of his arm. Monimia, more terrified every ſtep ſhe took, and dreading leſt he ſhould inſiſt upon following her to the Hall, now acquired courage to entreat that he would leave her; while he, regardleſs of the diſtreſs ſo evident in her countenance, endeavoured to prevail upon her to liſten to him: and in this manner they had proceeded nearly to the part of the woods which open directly into the park, when ſuddenly, at a ſharp turn of the path, Orlando, with his gun upon his ſhoulder, ſtood before them.

Amazement and indignation were pictured in his countenance when he beheld a ſtranger walking cloſe to Monimia, and ſeeming to have his arm round her waiſt.

Thrown

Thrown totally off his guard by an appearance ſo ſudden and ſo extraordinary, he cried, "Pray, who is this gentleman?—Pray, what does this mean?" Betty, who had been detained ſome paces behind, now approached; and Orlando, recollecting himſelf, took no other notice of Monimia, who would, had ſhe dared, have flown to him for protection: but, ſlightly touching his hat, he advanced to Sir John, and ſaid, "I ſuppoſe, Sir, you have Mrs. Rayland's permiſſion to ſhoot in theſe preſerved grounds?"

"I always ſhoot, Sir," anſwered Sir John haughtily, "in all grounds that happen to ſuit me, whether they are preſerved or no, and take no trouble to aſk leave of any body."

"Then, Sir," ſaid Orlando with quickneſs, "you muſt allow me to ſay that you do a very unhandſome thing."

"And I," rejoined the other, "ſay, whether you allow it or no, that you are a very impertinent fellow."

The

The blood ruſhed into the face of Orlando; and even the pale and terrified countenance of Monimia, who caught hold of Betty for ſupport, did not deter him from reſenting this inſolence. "Who are you," cried he, ſeizing Sir John by the collar, "that thus dare to inſult me?"

"And who are you, ſcoundrel," anſwered his antagoniſt, endeavouring to diſengage himſelf, "who dare to behave with ſuch confounded impudence to a man of my conſequence?"

"Curſe on your conſequence!" exclaimed the enraged Orlando, throwing him violently from him: "If you are a gentleman, which I doubt, give me an opportunity of telling you properly who I am."

"*If* I am a gentleman?" cried the other. "Am I queſtioned by a park-keeper? or by ſome dirty valet?"

Sir John, who was quite the modern man of faſhion, did not much approve of the ſpecimen Orlando had given him of athletic powers:—he liked him ſtill leſs when

when he replied—"My name is Somerive—my uſual reſidence at Weſt Wolverton, or Rayland Hall. Now, Sir, as you ſpeak neither to a park-keeper nor a valet, you muſt tell me from whom I have received this brutal inſult."

"My ſervant will tell you," replied he; "and, if you are likely to forget his information, you ſhall hear it properly from me to-morrow. In the mean time, my dear girl," added he, turning familiarly to Monimia, "let us leave this fierce drawcanſir to watch the old lady's pheaſants; and as you ſeem much alarmed by his ridiculous fury, let me have the pleaſure of ſeeing you ſafe home."

He would then have taken the arm of the trembling Monimia within his; but ſhe ſhrunk from him, and would have paſſed on. He ſtill inſiſted, however, on being permitted to attend her home; when Orlando, quite unable to command himſelf, ſprung forward, and, ſeizing the arm of Monimia, cried, "This young lady, being

being under the protection of Mrs. Rayland, is under mine; and I inſiſt on her not being troubled with your impertinent familiarity. Come, Madam, if you will give me leave, I will conduct you to your aunt." He then, without waiting for any farther reply, walked haſtily away; while Sir John, filled with rage and contempt, bade his ſervant follow him, and inform him that the perſon whom he had thus groſsly affronted was Sir John Berkely Belgrave, baronet, of Belgrave Park in Suffolk, brother-in-law to the Earl of Glenlyon of Scotland, and member of parliament. Orlando heard this liſt of dignities with contemptuous coolneſs; and then, as he continued to walk on, bade the ſervant tell his maſter, Sir John Berkely Belgrave, of Belgrave Park in Suffolk, brother-in-law to the Earl of Glenlyon of Scotland, and member of parliament, that he expected to hear from him.

They were no ſooner out of ſight, than Orlando, addreſſing himſelf to Betty (for

Monimia

Monimia was quite unable to anſwer him), ſaid: "Where did you meet this man? and how came you to be with him?"

"Lord," ſaid Betty, pertly, "how could we help it? and pray where was the harm? For my part, I always ſpeak to gentlefolks that ſpeak to me; I've no notion of ſitting mum chance, when gentlemen are ſo civil as to ſpeak genteel to one. Here's a fuſs, indeed, about nothing! And ſo you've gone and made a fine piece of work, and had a mind for to have fit that baron knight—I ſuppoſe there will be a pretty to do!"

"But where did you meet him?" repeated Orlando impatiently.

"Don't bite one's noſe off," ſaid Betty: "Gemini! what a paſſion you puts yourſelf into—Met him!—why we met him, and two more very obliging civil gentlemen as I ever wiſh to ſee; your brother was one of them, and what then? I'm ſure it's waſt ridiculous to quarrel and fall out about a few naſty pheaſants, with all the gentlefolks about. That's the reaſon that Miſtreſs never

never has nobody come to ſee her at the Hall; and one may as well live in a priſon. I'm quite ſick of it, for my ſhare."

As nothing but mutterings were to be obtained from Betty, Orlando no longer queſtioned her; but as his firſt emotion of ſomething like anger mingled with vexation towards Monimia had now ſubſided, he ſaid to her, in a low and mournful voice, "This is all very diſagreeable; would to God you had never gone this unlucky walk!"

"Would to God I never had! for now I ſee nothing but miſery will ariſe from it. But let us part here:" (they were now in the park) "it is quite enough for me to have gone through what has paſſed within this hour; there is no occaſion to add to my terror, by letting my aunt ſee us together. I thought I ſhould ſuffer enough by being ſo late home; but, good God! what is *that* fear in compariſon of what I ſuffer now about this quarrel?"

"The quarrel, as you call it, will be of no

no conſequence, Monimia: I ſhall probably hear no more of it;—or, if I do, Mrs. Rayland will not be diſpleaſed at my having ſpoken to theſe men, who have ſo long impertinently treſpaſſed on her manors."

"But who," ſaid Monimia, "who ſhall enſure your ſafety, Orlando, if you *do* hear more of it?"

"I muſt take my chance about that. Do not, my Monimia," whiſpered he, "make yourſelf uneaſy about it: I ſhall ſee you at night; and now, perhaps, it will be better to part." He then ſaid aloud, that Betty might hear, who was a few paces behind, "Since you ſeem now to be delivered from the perſecution of this impertinent ſtranger, I wiſh you a good morning." Orlando then walked another way, as if purſuing his diverſion of ſhooting; and Betty joining Monimia, they proceeded together towards the houſe.

As they went, Betty, who was very much diſpleaſed with Orlando, becauſe he ſeemed

to

to have given all that attention to Monimia which ſhe had herſelf a great inclination to monopolize, began again to exclaim againſt the folly of his having driven away and quarrelled with a baron knight, as ſhe emphatically termed it. "Why one would have thof," cried ſhe, "actually that the gentleman, who is in my mind a pretty gentleman, had done ſome great harm. If Mr. Orlando had been your ſweetheart, Miſs, he couldn't have bruſtled up in a greater paſſion."

"My ſweetheart!" ſaid Monimia faintly; "how can he be my ſweetheart, when you know, Betty, I have hardly exchanged ten words with him in my whole life?"

"Well, Miſs, you nid not colour ſo about it—Lord, I ſuppoſe people have had ſweethearts before now; and the better's their luck:—not that I ſay Mr. Orlando is yours, for I knows to the contrary."

"I believe," ſaid Monimia, making an effort to command herſelf, "I believe, Betty, it will be as well, on many accounts, not to

ſay

ſay any thing about all this at home. If this unlucky quarrel ſhould go any farther, which I hope it will not, it will make my aunt very angry if ſhe knows we were preſent at it;—and, upon the whole, I wiſh you would make a reſolution not to ſpeak of it."

"Not I," anſwered Betty, "I ſhan't ſpeak of it, not I.—I'm none of your blabs—and ſcorn to ſay any thing to make miſchief;—beſides, we ſhall have anger enough for ſtaying ſo much later than we were bid to ſtay. Yes; we ſhall have a fine rattle; and there ſtands Madam Lennard at the window, watching for us." They were now near the houſe, and poor Monimia, looking up, ſaw her aunt indeed watching their return. She trembled ſo much, that ſhe could hardly find ſtrength to get into the houſe; where as ſoon as Betty arrived, ſhe was haſtening to the kitchen; but Monimia finding it impoſſible to meet, alone, the firſt rage of her aunt, entreated her to go up ſtairs."

"Do not leave me, dear Betty," ſaid the timid Monimia; "I am in ſuch terror already, that if my aunt is very violent againſt me, I really believe I ſhall die on the ſpot. You have more courage than I have—for Heaven's ſake, do not leave me."

"I don't know any good I can do," replied Betty; "but however, if I muſt go, I muſt." They then aſcended the ſtairs together, and entered the room where Mrs. Lennard waited for them in the diſpoſition of an hungry tigreſs who has long been diſappointed of her prey. She ſcolded with ſuch vehemence for near half an hour, that ſhe abſolutely exhauſted every form of invective and reproach which her very fertile genius, and the vocabulary of Billingſgate, could furniſh her with; and then taking Monimia rudely by the arm, ſhe led her to her turret, and locked her in, proteſting that, ſo far from ever ſuffering her to go junketing out again to the village, ſhe ſhould not leave her room for a week.

With

With this threat ſhe left her weeping niece, and turned the key upon her: but Monimia, ſomewhat relieved by her departure, felt with ſecret delight that it was not in her power to confine her—and that at night ſhe ſhould ſee Orlando. Yet the danger he had run into recurred to her with redoubled force; and never did ſhe paſs ſuch miſerable hours as thoſe that intervened between her aunt's fierce remonſtrance, and that when ſhe expected the ſignal from Orlando.

CHAP. X.

THE unfortunate rencontre which promiſed to produce ſo much uneaſineſs, was occaſioned by the impatience of Orlando at Monimia's long abſence. He had gone early in the morning to his father's, as he had the preceding evening propoſed: and returning about ten o'clock, anxious to know if Monimia was come back from her walk, he enquired among the ſervants for Betty; and was told that ſhe was not yet come home from the village, whither Mrs. Lennard had ſent her early in the morning. "What do you want with Betty, ſir?" ſaid Pattenſon, who heard the enquiry. "To make the fire up in my room," replied Orlando. "Any other of the maids can do that as well, I ſuppoſe," anſwered the butler, ſullenly: and then, from

from his manner, Orlando was firſt ſtruck with the idea, that Pattenſon, being an admirer of Betty, was apprehenſive of his acquiring too much of her favour. This obſervation was a great relief to him, and diſſipated the fears he had long entertained, that the old butler ſuſpected his ſtolen interviews with Monimia.

Uneaſy, however, at her ſtaying ſo much later than the hour when he knew ſhe was ordered to return, he could not forbear making a circuit round the wood-walks of the park, where he could not be obſerved, and paſſing towards the preſerved pheaſant-grounds, through which her path lay; where he had not waited long before the appearance of Monimia, attended by Sir John Belgrave, produced the alarming converſation which the laſt chapter related.

When Orlando parted from Monimia, and began coolly to conſider what had happened, he felt no other uneaſineſs than that which aroſe from his apprehenſion that her name might be brought in queſtion; for he

was a ſtranger to all perſonal fear, and was totally indifferent to the reſentment of Sir John Belgrave, which he thought it probable he might think it wiſe to lay aſide; for he did not appear to be one of thoſe who are eager to acquire fame by perſonal danger. However that might be, Orlando's principal concern was, how to appeaſe the fears of Monimia; and as early as it was ſafe to go to the turret, he repaired thither; but this happened almoſt an hour later than uſual. Pattenſon had viſitors, ſome tradeſmen from a neighbouring town, to ſup with him; and Orlando, who was upon the watch, had the mortification to hear them ſinging in the butler's room at half after eleven, and to find it near one o'clock when they betook themſelves to their horſes, and departed. It was yet near half an hour longer before the lights about the houſe were extinguiſhed, and all was quiet.

The night, dark and tempeſtuous, added to the gloomy appearance of all that ſurrounded Monimia; while her imagination,

filled

filled with images of horror, repreſented to her, that his delay was owing to the conſequences of his morning's adventure: and theſe apprehenſions, added to the fatigue and anxiety ſhe had gone through during the day, almoſt overcame her, before the well known, long wiſhed for ſignal was heard.

At length Orlando had ſafely placed her by the fire, and began to ſpeak as cheerfully as he could of what had paſſed; but he ſaw her pale, dejected, and ready to ſink—her eyes ſwollen with weeping—and her whole frame languid, depreſſed by the uneaſy circumſtances of the day, and the uneaſy ſuſpenſe of the night. For the latter he eaſily accounted; and he endeavoured to diſſipate her dread as to the conſequences of the former. "This fine gentleman," ſaid he, "who could perſecute with his inſulting attentions a young and defenceleſs woman, my Monimia, can never have much proper and ſteady courage; or, if he has, he will, if he has a ſhadow of underſtand-

ing, be aſhamed of exerting it in ſuch a cauſe. Beſides, after all the applications that have with great civility been made to Mr. Stockton, entreating him to forbear, either by himſelf, his friends or ſervants, treſpaſſing on thoſe woods, where Mrs. Rayland is ſo fond of preſerving the game, nothing can be more ungentleman-like than to perſiſt in it: it looks like taking advantage of Mrs. Rayland's being without any man about her who has a right to enforce her wiſhes, which, whether capricious and abſurd or no, ſhould ſurely be reſpected. I feel myſelf perfectly juſtified for having ſpoken as I did, and only regret that you were preſent. Relate to me, Monimia, what paſſed before I met you. Did not Betty ſay, that my brother was one of the people who were with this Sir John Belgrave?"

Monimia then related all that had paſſed, as well as the alarm ſhe had been in had allowed her to obſerve it; and in the behaviour of his brother, particularly in the

ſpeech

ſpeech he had made to Monimia as he paſſed her, Orlando found more cauſe of vexation than in any other circumſtance of the morning. He foreſaw that the beauty of Monimia, which had hitherto been quite unobſerved, would now become the topic of common converſation; his father and his family would be alarmed, and his ſtay at the Hall imputed to motives very different from his love of ſolitude and ſtudy. Hitherto Monimia had ſeemed a beautiful and unique gem, of which none but himſelf had diſcovered the concealment, or knew the value. He had viſited it with fonder idolatry, from alone poſſeſſing the knowledge where it was hid. But now half his happineſs ſeemed to be deſtroyed, ſince his treaſure was diſcovered, and particularly by his brother, who was ſo looſe in his principles, and ſo unfeeling in his conduct. As theſe painful reflections paſſed through his mind, he ſat a while ſilent and dejected, till, being awakened from his mournful reverie by a deep ſigh from Monimia, he

ſaw her face bathed in tears. "Ah! Orlando," ſaid ſhe, in a tremulous voice, "I ſee that you feel as I do. All our little happineſs is deſtroyed; perhaps this is the laſt night we ſhall ever meet: ſomething tells me, that the conſequence of this luckleſs day will be our eternal ſeparation." The ſobs that ſwelled her boſom as ſhe ſaid this impeded her utterance. Orlando, with more than uſual tenderneſs, endeavoured to ſooth and re-aſſure her—when ſuddenly, as he hung fondly over her, ſpeaking to her in a low voice, ſhe ſtarted, and ſaid, in a whiſper, "Huſh, huſh—for heaven's ſake—I hear a noiſe in the chapel." Orlando liſtened a moment. "No—it is only the wind, which is very high to-night." But liſtening again a moment, he thought, as ſhe did, that it was ſomething more; and before he had time to imagine what it might be, the old heavy lock of the ſtudy door, that opened from the paſſage to the chapel, was moved ſlowly; the door as ſlowly opened, and at it a human face juſt appeared. Starting up,

Orlando,

Orlando, whoſe fears were ever alive for Monimia, blew out the ſingle candle which ſtood at ſome diſtance from them; and then ſpringing towards the door he demanded fiercely who was there. Monimia, whoſe terror almoſt annihilated her faculties, would have thrown herſelf into his arms, and there have waited the diſcovery which appeared more dreadful than death: but he was inſtantly gone, and purſued through the chapel a man, whom however he could not overtake, and who ſeemed at the door to vaniſh—though the night was ſo dark, that it was impoſſible to diſtinguiſh any object whatever. Through the chapel he had heard the ſound of feet; but when he got to the porch, and from thence liſtened for the ſame ſound to direct his purſuit along the flag-ſtones, it was heard no more. All was profoundly ſilent, unleſs the ſtillneſs was interrupted by the howling of the wind round the old buildings.

Orlando, after a moment's pauſe, was diſpoſed to faſten the chapel door before he re-

returned; but he recollected that perhaps he might enclose an enemy within it, or impede the escape of his Monimia to her turret. Uncertain therefore what to do, but too certain of the agonizing fears to which he had left her exposed, he hastily went back; and securing that door which led from the chapel to the passage as well as he could (for there was no key to it, and only a small rusty bar), and then fastening the door of the study, he approached, by the light of the wood fire which was nearly extinguished, the fainting Monimia, who, unable to support herself, had sunk on the ground, and rested her head on the old tapestry chair on which she had been sitting.

Orlando found her cold, and almost insensible; and it was some moments before he could restore her to her speech. Terror had deprived her of the power of shedding tears; nor had she strength to sit up: but when he had placed her in her chair, he was compelled to support her, while he endeavoured

deavoured to make light of a circumſtance that overwhelmed him with alarm for her, and with vexation beyond what he had ever yet experienced.

They had both diſtinctly beheld the face, though neither had the leaſt idea to whom it belonged. Orlando had as diſtinctly heard the footſteps along the hollow ground of the chapel; it was not therefore one of thoſe ſupernatural beings, to whoſe exiſtence Monimia had been taught to give credit. Orlando would willingly have ſheltered himſelf under ſuch a prejudice, had it been poſſible; for all the ghoſts in the Red Sea would have terrified him leſs than the diſcovery of Monimia by any of the family: yet, that ſuch a diſcovery was made, he could not doubt; and the more he thought of even its immediate conſequences, and the impoſſibility there might be to reconvey his lovely trembling charge to her own room, the greater his diſtraction became; while all he could make Monimia ſay, was, "Deareſt Orlando, let me ſtay and

die

die here. A few hours longer of ſuch extreme pain, as I at this moment ſuffer, will certainly kill me: and if I die in your preſence, my death will be happier than my life *has* been, or than now it ever can be."

Orlando being thus under the neceſſity of conquering his own extreme diſquiet, that he might appeaſe hers, began to make various conjectures as to this man, tending to encourage the hope that it was ſome accidental intruder, and not one whoſe buſineſs was to diſcover her. "But even if the villain came with that deſign," ſaid he, "I do not believe he could diſtinguiſh you, ſo inſtantly I blew out the candle: or, if he ſaw a female figure, he could not know it to be you; it might as well be any other woman." Theſe ſuppoſitions had little power to quiet the fears with which Monimia was tormented: but when Orlando ſeemed ſo deeply affected by her ſituation; when he declared to her that he was unequal to the ſight of her terror; and that not even the

diſ-

diſcovery they dreaded, could make him ſo wretched as ſeeing her in ſuch a ſituation; ſhe made an effort to recover herſelf; and at length ſucceeded ſo well as to regain the power of conſulting with him, as to what was beſt to be done.

It was now early morning, but ſtill very dark, with rain and wind. It was however time to conſider of Monimia's return; for within two hours the ſervants would be up, and in even leſs time the labourers in the gardens would come to their work. It was at length agreed, that Orlando ſhould go through the chapel firſt, and try if he could diſcover any traces of their alarming viſitor; and if, after his reconnoitring, all appeared ſafe, that Monimia ſhould return as uſual to her apartment.

Orlando then, directing her to faſten herſelf the ſtudy door within ſide, went through the chapel with a candle in his hand, which he ſhaded with his hat to prevent the light being ſeen from the windows. He looked carefully among the broken boards which had

had once formed two or three pews, and then went into the chancel, but ſaw nothing. He paſſed through the porch, leaving his candle behind the door on one of the benches, but nobody appeared: and by the very faint light of the firſt dawn, on a ſtormy October morning, which ſerved only to make "the darkneſs viſible," he could juſt ſee round the whole chapel court, and was ſatisfied nobody was there. Thus convinced, he returned to Monimia; aſſured her that the wretch, whoever he was, was gone; and that there ſeemed to be no danger in her returning to her apartment. He endeavoured again to perſuade her that her alarm, however juſt, would end without any of the conſequences they dreaded; made her ſwallow a large glaſs of wine; and then taking one of her hands in his, he put his other arm round her waiſt; and with uncertain ſteps himſelf, while through fear *her* feet almoſt refuſed to move, they proceeded ſlowly and lightly through the chapel; neither of them ſpoke; Monimia

hardly

hardly breathed; when arriving about the middle of it, they were ſtruck motionleſs by a ſudden and loud craſh, which ſeemed to proceed from the chancel; and a deep hollow voice pronounced the words, "Now —now."

There was a heavy ſtone font in the middle of the chapel, with a ſort of bench under it. Orlando, unable at once to ſupport and defend Monimia, placed her on this bench; and imploring her to take courage, he darted forward into the chancel, from whence he was ſure the voice had iſſued, and cried aloud, "Who is there? Speak this moment. Who are you?"

The words re-echoed through the vaulted chancel, but no anſwer was returned: again, and in a yet louder voice, he repeated them, and again liſtened to hear if any reply was made. A ſlight and indiſtinct noiſe like the ſhutting a diſtant door, and a low murmur which ſoon died away, left every thing in profound ſilence. He remained however yet an inſtant liſtening, while Monimia, reſting

reſting againſt the ſtone a cheek almoſt as cold, was petrified with exceſs of fear; and in the dread pauſe between Orlando's queſtion and his awaiting an anſwer, the old banners which hung over her head, waving and ruſtling with the current of air, ſeemed to repeat the whiſpers of ſome terrific and inviſible being, foretelling woe and deſtruction; while the ſame wind by which theſe fragments were agitated hummed ſullenly among the helmets and gauntlets, trophies of the proweſs of former Sir Orlandos and Sir Hildebrands, which were ſuſpended from the pillars of the chapel.

When Orlando returned to her, he found her more dead than alive. He ſoothed, he ſupported her, and earneſtly beſought her to exert herſelf againſt the fear that oppreſſed her.

"What ſhall we do, Monimia?" ſaid he. "For my own part, rather than ſee you ſuffer thus, I will take you in my hand, and declare at once to theſe people, whoever they are, that we cannot live apart.

And

And ſhould we, by ſuch an avowal, forfeit the protection of our friends, what is there in that ſo very dreadful? I am young and ſtrong, and well able to work in any way for a ſubſiſtence for us both. Tell me, Monimia, ſhould you fear poverty, if we could but live together?"

"No," replied Monimia, acquiring courage from this exceſs of tenderneſs in her lover—"no, Orlando, I ſhould be too happy to be allowed to beg with you round the world." "What then have we to fear?" whiſpered he. "Come, let us go and face theſe people, if, as their expreſſion "Now" ſeems to intimate, they are waiting for us without. In the chapel they are not, however the ſound ſeemed to come from thence. I fear they way-lay us at the door. But if we are thus prepared againſt the worſt that can befall us, why ſhould we ſhrink now, only to be expoſed a ſecond time to alarms that ſeem to threaten your life, from your extreme timidity? Tell me, Monimia, have you

you courage to brave the diſcovery at once, which ſooner or later muſt be made?"

"I *have* courage," anſwered ſhe; "let us go while I am able." She aroſe, but could hardly ſtand. Orlando however led her forward, liſtening ſtill every ſtep they took. They heard nothing either in the chapel or in the porch; and being now on the pavement without, they ſtopped and looked around them, expecting that the perſon or perſons whoſe words had alarmed them would appear: but there was nobody to be ſeen, yet it was now light enough to diſcern every part of the court. "This is wonderful," ſaid Orlando; "but ſince there ſeems to be nothing to prevent it, let me ſee you, my Monimia, ſafe to your room; and let me hope to have the comfort of knowing, that after the fatigues and terrors of ſuch a day and night, you obtain ſome repoſe." "How can you know it, Orlando," anſwered ſhe, "ſince it will be madneſs, if we eſcape now, to think of venturing

turing a meeting to-morrow night?" "I would not have you venture it; but, Monimia, I have thought of a way, by which I can hear from you and write to you in the courſe of the day, which, under our preſent circumſtances, muſt be an infinite ſatisfaction. As I have at all hours acceſs to the turret, I can put a letter at your door behind your bed; and there you can depoſit an anſwer." To this expedient Monimia readily aſſented. Without any alarm they paſſed the reſt of their ſhort walk. Monimia promiſed to go immediately to bed, and to endeavour to compoſe herſelf; and Orlando, having ſeen her ſecured in her turret, returned to the chapel, determined to diſcover, if poſſible, what it was that had ſo cruelly alarmed them. Again he went over every part, but could diſcover nothing. He then determined to go round the houſe; and reſolute not to ſpare any wretch who might be lurking about it with evil deſigns, he went into a large uninhabited parlour that opened into the ſtudy from the

body

body of the houſe, where, over the chimney, ſeveral ſorts of arms were diſpoſed, which for many years had never been uſed. He took down an hanger, and a pair of horſe piſtols: both were ſomewhat injured by neglect, and of the latter he knew he could make no uſe till they had been cleaned; but drawing the hanger from its ſcabbard, he ſallied forth in eager expectation of finding ſome means to diſcover, and at leaſt to terrify from future intruſion, the man he had ſeen and heard: but after wandering round the houſe, through the gardens, and even over the adjoining offices, for above an hour, he ſaw nothing that could lead him to gueſs who it could be. The workmen and ſervants were all at their uſual employments. He talked to ſome of them, but obſerved no conſciouſneſs of any thing extraordinary in any of them. He then returned, not leſs uneaſy than before his ſearch. Sometimes the idea of Sir John Belgrave preſented itſelf; but that he ſhould have ventured to viſit the Hall at ſuch an

hour, he ſoon rejected as an impoſſibility. Had Mrs. Rayland diſcovered his intelligence with Monimia, ſhe would have ſignified her diſpleaſure openly and at once. At length, he ſuppoſed it might be his brother. This, as Philip Somerive knew the houſe, appeared the leaſt improbable of all his conjectures. But ſtill it was hardly to be ſuppoſed that he would leave his jovial companions on ſuch a night for the pleaſure of perſecuting him, when ſo many other means were now in his power, by which he might diſturb the happineſs of Orlando. Diſſatisfied with every ſuppoſition, but becoming every inſtant more reſtleſs and anxious, he waited with impatience for the cuſtomary time of viſiting Mrs. Rayland. It came, and ſhe behaved to him juſt as uſual. Some hours, therefore, were ſtill paſſed in fruitleſs conjectures and tormenting ſuſpenſe.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

ORLANDO left Mrs. Rayland about twelve o'clock, convinced that, whatever diſcovery had been made, ſhe was yet perfectly unacquainted with it. He thought it beſt to tell her as much of what had happened the preceding day, as he was ſure ſhe would not diſapprove: he therefore mentioned to her, in the preſence of Lennard, who ſeemed as ignorant of any miſadventure as ſhe was, that he had gone round the park with his gun, after his return from his father's in the morning, and, hearing ſeveral ſhot fired in the copſes, he had followed the ſound. "I met, madam," ſaid he, "Mrs. Lennard's niece and your ſervant Betty, and almoſt at the ſame moment a gentleman ſhooting, and a ſervant following

following him with ſeveral pheaſants. I thought it neceſſary to ſpeak to him; and we had rather high words. I found he had two companions with him, whom I did not ſee: Stockton himſelf was one of them (Orlando always carefully avoided naming his brother). The man to whom I ſpoke, was, I found from his ſervant, a baronet."

"A baronet, child!" ſaid Mrs. Rayland. "Impoſſible! at leaſt if he is, it muſt be one of the new-made baronets: theſe, as well as new-created lords, ſpring up like muſhrooms, from nobody knows where, every year. A man of family could not behave ſo. This perſon is ſome enriched tradeſman, who has bought his title. Belgrave!—Belgrave!—I don't recollect the name. No; he cannot be a man of any family."

Orlando ſaw that Mrs. Rayland had not the leaſt idea of the circumſtances likely to follow his dialogue with Sir John Belgrave, and only dwelt upon the improbability that a man whoſe title was above two years old,

could commit ſo great an indecorum as he had been guilty of. Unwilling, therefore, to awaken in her mind thoſe apprehenſions of future conſequences, of which ſhe ſeemed quite ignorant, he ſoon after turned the diſcourſe; and, leaving her and Mrs. Lennard both in perfect good humour, he returned to his ſtudy, and ſat down to give Monimia the ſatisfaction of knowing, that, to whomſoever the affright of the preceding evening was owing, Mrs. Rayland and her aunt had certainly no ſhare in it, and as yet no ſuſpicion of their intercourſe.

He had been employed thus near half an hour, and had juſt finiſhed his letter, when Betty bounced into his room.

"There's one without vants to ſpeak to you," cried ſhe: pouting and ſullenly ſhe ſpoke; and then, ſhutting the door as haſtily as ſhe had opened it, was going: but Orlando, following her, ſaid, "Betty! who is it? If the perſon has a letter for me, let it be ſent in; if not, beg to know his name." (A letter or a meſſage from

from Sir John Belgrave was what he expected.)

"I ſhan't carry none of your meſſages, indeed," replied the girl: "but I ſuppoſe the perſon without is your father; I never ſee him but once or twice, but I'm pretty ſure 'tis he."

"Good God!" exclaimed Orlando; "and why, then, if you knew him, would you let my father wait without?"

"'Twas no buſineſs of mine, Mr. Orlando, to ſhew him in; and beſides, folks ſometimes has *company* with them in their rooms, you know; and then an old father may be one too many, Mr. Orlando."

"What do you mean by that?" cried Orlando eagerly.

"Nay, never mind what I means—I knows what I knows; but I think you mid as well take care not to get other folks into bad bread, that are as innocent as the child unborn."

"I inſiſt upon your telling me," ſaid Orlando, ſeizing her hand——"I inſiſt,

nay I implore you, *dear* Betty, to tell me——"

At this moment the old butler appeared at the door of the parlour in which they were ſtanding; and ſeeing Orlando apparently interceding with Betty, he ſaid roughly,

"Inſtead of pulling the wenches about, and behaving in this rakiſh ſort of way in *my* miſtreſs's houſe, it would be more becoming of you to go ſpeak to your father, who is waiting in the ſtable-yard."

"You are impertinent, Mr. Pattenſon!" anſwered Orlando; "and I beg you will underſtand that impertinence from any one I am not diſpoſed to endure."

Orlando then went haſtily out—Pattenſon muttering as he paſſed, "I don't know how you'll help yourſelf."

In the ſtable-yard Orlando found Mr. Somerive. He had not diſmounted, having made it a rule for many years never to enter Mrs. Rayland's houſe unleſs he was invited. Orlando ſaw by his counte-

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nance that he was under great concern; and reſpectfully approaching him, he ſaid, "Dear Sir, is all well at home? Is my mother returned? Is ſhe well?"

"Your mother is not returned, Orlando," replied Mr. Somerive in a grave and melancholy tone; "but ſhe is well, and all is well at home."

"I hope then, Sir, that I owe this viſit merely to your kindneſs. Will you get off your horſe, and come in?—I have a fire in the library—or ſhall I let Mrs. Rayland know you are here?"

"Neither the one or the other," replied Mr. Somerive. "But get your horſe immediately, and come with me; I have buſineſs with you."

"I have only ſlippers on, Sir; will you walk in while I put on my boots?"

"You will not need them—I ſhall not detain you long. Your horſe is already ſaddled by my deſire—You have your hat, and therefore haſten to follow me."

Orlando would have given half a world

to have had an opportunity of depoſiting his letter to Monimia, which he had put haſtily into his pocket; but there was now no poſſibility of eſcaping to do it: and in the hope that his father would ſoon diſmiſs him, yet foreſeeing that what he had to ſay was of a very painful nature, he mounted his horſe, which one of the grooms brought out, and followed his father acroſs the park. Mr. Somerive was ſilent till they had got at ſome diſtance from the houſe. Orlando rode by his ſide a foot pace. He obſerved that his father ſighed deeply two or three times, and at length ſaid: "Orlando, I deſire you will give me a faithful detail of all that paſſed yeſterday."

The events of the night dwelt more upon his mind than thoſe of the day; and believing therefore that his father alluded to them, he bluſhed deeply, and repeated, "All that paſſed yeſterday, Sir?"

"Yes," replied the father; "you certainly don't mean to affect miſunderſtanding me. You have got into a quarrel with

one

one of the gueſts of Mr. Stockton: I have heard of it from one quarter; let me now have your account of it."

"That is very eaſily given, my dear Sir," anſwered Orlando, relieved by finding that the adventures of the night were not meant. "I met a gentleman ſhooting in thoſe woods, where, you know, it has been for years the particular whim of Mrs. Rayland, as it was, they tell me, of her father, to preſerve the pheaſants. You know that Mr. Stockton has often been entreated to forbear; and you will allow that it is unhandſome to perſiſt in doing what is offenſive to a defenceleſs woman: therefore, upon meeting this Sir John Something, with his ſervant carrying a net full of birds, I ſpoke to him on the impropriety of his ſhooting in thoſe woods, and indeed almoſt within the park. He anſwered me very inſolently, and I collared him; after which ſome rather high words paſſed between us. He ſent his ſervant after me

with his addreſs; and I expected to have heard farther from him to-day."

"And was that all, Orlando?" ſaid Mr. Somerive, looking ſteadily, and ſomewhat ſternly, in his face.

"That was all that paſſed, Sir," replied Orlando, heſitating, and bluſhing again.

"And was there no other perſon preſent when this quarrel happened? Was there no other cauſe for your diſpleaſure againſt this gentleman, than what aroſe from his having killed theſe birds?—Orlando, I uſed in your infancy and early youth to have the firmeſt reliance on your veracity; ſhall I have the infinite mortification *now* to find myſelf miſtaken?"

"No, Sir," anſwered Orlando, "nor now, nor ever: I have no reaſon to be aſhamed of ſaying the truth, when called upon—though I ſhould——"

"Come, come, Orlando!" cried his father; "you would not tell it, if you could, without being guilty of the meanneſs of a direct falſehood, conceal it. There were

two

two young women preſent; and you thought it neceſſary to reſent the behaviour of this Sir John Belgrave to one of them."

"Yes, I thought him very impertinent. The young woman was terrified, and I conſidered myſelf bound to protect her from him. I am ſure, Sir, you would yourſelf have done the ſame thing."

"Perhaps I might. You are acquainted then with this girl, for whom you exerciſed your chivalry?"

"Certainly," ſaid Orlando, again bluſhing ſo much that his father could not but perceive it—"certainly I am—am acquainted with her; that is—I know her, to be ſure, a little;—indeed, as I live ſo much under the ſame roof, it would be odd, and ſtrange, if I did not."

"Very odd and ſtrange indeed, Orlando," replied Mr. Somerive drily—"very odd and very ſtrange!—eſpecially as your brother tells me that the damſel is remarkably handſome."

"Well, Sir," cried Orlando with quickneſs, "admitting it to be ſo: does my brother think to do me an ill office with you, by telling you that I admire beauty; or that I defended a woman, for whom, if ſhe had been ugly, I ſhould equally have interpoſed, from the impudent perſecutions of a coxcomb?"

"I do not believe that your brother intended to do you an ill office. On the contrary, he came to me this morning, at an hour when a viſit from him was very unexpected, to tell me that he was very uneaſy at the reſentment expreſſed by Sir John Belgrave; and to deſire I would prevent this diſagreeable affair from going farther, by prevailing on you to make ſome proper apology."

"And if that was my brother's ſole intention, I ſee no neceſſity for his having named the lady; there was otherwiſe ground enough for the quarrel, if a quarrel it can be called. However, I heartily forgive Philip; and am only ſorry that he thinks

he

he has cauſe to do me every diſſervice in his power."

"Do you call his anxiety for your ſafety a diſſervice? He hopes to prevent any riſk of it, by telling me what has happened, and procuring, before it is too late, an apology."

Orlando checked his tears: "And does my father really think," ſaid he, "that I *ought* to make an apology?"

"If the affair paſſed as Philip repreſented it to me, I think you ought; for you ſeem by that account to have been the aggreſſor."

"No, Sir," cried Orlando: "in every thing elſe your commands ſhould be my law; but here I hope you will not lay them upon me, becauſe I feel that, for the firſt time in my life, I muſt diſobey them."

"And your mother," ſaid Mr. Somerive, "your mother, on her return, is to hear that you are engaged in a duel; that you have either killed a man, who is a ſtranger to you, for the ſake of a few paltry pheaſants, or have yourſelf fallen? Oh raſh and

headlong boy!—if you did not feel deeper reſentment than what a treſpaſs on Mrs. Rayland's grounds occaſioned, you would not thus have engaged in a diſpute ſo alarming. I greatly fear your attachment to that girl."

Orlando, without denying or aſſenting to the truth of this accuſation, related diſtinctly the very words that had paſſed.—"You ſee, Sir," continued he, "that it was about no girl the quarrel began; for, upon my ſoul! theſe were the very words."

"I think ſtill," ſaid his father, "that it is a very fooliſh affair; and, ſhould Sir John Belgrave inſiſt upon it, that you ought to make an excuſe."

"Never," ſaid Orlando; "and do not, dear Sir, do not, I conjure you, lay me under the cruel neceſſity of diſobeying you. You cannot, with all the ſpirit you poſſeſs yourſelf, deſire me to act like a coward; you muſt deſpiſe me if I did: and even my dear, my tender mother would bluſh for her ſon, if ſhe thought him afraid of

any

any man when he is conſcious of a good cauſe."

"What is to be done, then?" cried Somerive in great perplexity. "You will certainly receive a challenge, Orlando."

"And then I muſt certainly accept it. But indeed, dear Sir, you are needleſsly diſtreſſed: if this warlike Sir John muſt vindicate his injured honour by firing a brace of piſtols at me, I have as good a chance as he has; and at all events, if I fall, you will be delivered from the anxiety of providing for me, and I ſhall die lamented, which is better than to live diſgraced. But after all (ſeeing his father's diſtreſs increaſe), I am much miſtaken if this moſt magnanimous baronet had not rather let it alone—A few hours will determine it; and before my mother's return, whom I ſhould be very ſorry to terrify, it will be over, one way or other."

"You will not then, Orlando, ſettle it by an apology?"

"Never, indeed, my dear Sir."

"Nor

"Nor give me your word that there is no attachment between you and this girl, this niece of Lennard's?"

"Why, my dear father," replied Orlando gaily, "if I am to be ſhot by Sir John Belgrave, my attachments are of little conſequence; it will therefore be time enough to talk of that when I find myſelf alive after our meeting."

"Young man," ſaid Somerive, with more ſternneſs than he almoſt ever ſhewed towards Orlando before, "you were once accuſtomed to obey implicitly all my commands. At hardly twenty, it is rather early to throw off all parental authority. But I ſee that the expectations you have formed of poſſeſſing the Rayland eſtate, have made you fancy yourſelf independent."

"Pardon me, dear Sir! if I ſay you greatly miſtake me. If I were to-morrow to find myſelf, by Mrs. Rayland's will, the owner of this property, which is of all things the moſt unlikely, I ſhould not be at all more independent than I am now;

for,

ſor, while my father lived, I ſhould be conſcious that he alone had a right to the Rayland eſtate; nor ſhould I then conſider myſelf otherwiſe than as a dependent on his bounty."

"There is no contending with you, Orlando," ſaid Mr. Somerive, burſting into tears; "I cannot bear this!—You muſt do, my ſon, as your own ſenſe and ſpirit dictate; and I muſt leave the event to Heaven, to whoſe protection I commit you!—Yet remember your mother, Orlando: remember your ſiſters, whoſe protector you will, I truſt, live to be; and do not, more raſhly than theſe unlucky circumſtances require, riſk a life ſo precious to us all."

Orlando threw himſelf off his horſe, and, ſeizing his father's hand, bathed it with his tears. Neither of them ſpoke for ſome moments. At length Orlando, recovering himſelf, ſaid: "My father! I would die rather than offend you—If I could, or if I can without cowardice and meanneſs

evade

evade a meeting which may give you pain, I will. In the mean time let us ſay nothing about this ſquabble to alarm my mother, if ſhe returns, as you ſay you expect ſhe will, to-morrow. If any thing happens worth your knowing, you ſhall inſtantly hear of it: and in the mean time let me entreat you not to make yourſelf uneaſy; for I am well convinced all will end without any of thoſe diſtreſſing events which your imagination has painted."

Mr. Somerive ſhook his head and ſighed. As he found nothing could be done with Orlando, he had determined to try to put a ſtop to the further progreſs of the affair, by his own interpoſition with Sir John Belgrave; and therefore, bidding Orlando tenderly adieu, he told him to go back to the Hall, while he himſelf went to his own houſe to conſider how he might beſt ward off the impending evil from a ſon whom he every day found more cauſe to love and admire. He ſaw too evidently that Orlando had an affection for Mrs. Lennard's niece;

niece; for which, though it might be productive of the loſs of Mrs. Rayland's favour, he knew not how to blame him. But theſe diſcoveries added new bitterneſs to the reflections he often made on the ſituation of Orlando; with which, notwithſtanding the flattering proſpect held out by Mrs. Rayland's late behaviour to him, his father could not be ſatisfied while it remained in ſuch uncertainty. The anxiety however that he felt for theſe circumſtances immediately ſuſpended his ſolicitude for what was to come. A few hours might perhaps terminate that life, about the future diſpoſition of which he was ſo continually meditating.

Orlando, deeply concerned at the diſtreſs of his father, and too much confirmed in his opinion of his brother's treachery and malice, returned to the Hall filled with diſquiet. He had now much to add to his letter to Monimia, for he reſolved to keep nothing a ſecret from her; and he went impatiently into his own room to finiſh his letter,

letter, when, upon the table, he found the following billet:

"SIR,

"As I find, on enquiry, you are by birth a gentleman, you cannot believe I can paſs over the very extraordinary language and conduct you choſe to make uſe of yeſterday. Yet, in conſideration of your youth, and of your relationſhip to Mr. Somerive, the friend of *my* friend Stockton, I ſhall no otherwiſe notice it than by deſiring you will write ſuch an apology as it becomes you to make, and me to receive. I am, Sir,

"Your humble ſervant,

Carloraine Caſtle, Oct. 18, 1776. } "J. B. BELGRAVE."

To this letter, which Orlando was told was delivered a few moments before by a ſervant who waited, he, without heſitation, returned the following anſwer:

"SIR,

"NOT conſcious of any impropriety in my conduct, I ſhall aſſuredly make no apology for

for it; and I beg that neither your indulgence to my youth, or my relationſhip to Mr. Philip Somerive, may prevent your naming any other ſatisfaction which your honour may require, and which I am immediately ready to give.

"I am, Sir,

"Your humble ſervant,

Rayland Hall, Oct. 18, 1776. "ORLANDO SOMERIVE."

Having diſpatched this billet, he continued very coolly to conclude his letter to Monimia; and this laſt circumſtance was the only one he concealed from her. Having done it, he went to the turret, and ſoftly mounted the ſtair-caſe, flattering himſelf that, if he heard no noiſe, and could be quite ſecure that no perſon was with her, he might venture to ſee Monimia for a few moments. He liſtened therefore impatiently; but, to his infinite mortification, heard Betty talking with more than her uſual volubility; and as his name was repeated,

peated, he could not help attending to her harangue.

"Oh! to be ſure," ſaid ſhe, in anſwer to ſomething Monimia had ſaid; "to be ſure, I warrant Orlando is a ſaint and an angel in your eyes—but I know ſomething."

"Tell me, Betty," ſaid Monimia tremulouſly, "tell me what you know."

"Why I know—that though he looks as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth, cheeſe won't choke him. I can tell you what, Miſs, he's ſlyer than his brother, but not a bitter gooder—What's more, he lets women into his room at night."

"Women!" cried Monimia, "what women? How ſhould he do that? and who ſhould they be?"

"That's more than I can tell; but ſome huſſy or other he does let in, I tell you, for I know they as have ſeen her. There's Pattenſon has been as mad as fury with me, ſaying as how it was me; and all I can ſay won't perſuade him to the contrary.—Egollys! if it had been me, I ſhould not have

have gone to have denied it, in ſpite of Pattenſon; but he's as mad as a dog, and won't hear nothing I can ſay, but ſwears he'll tell my Lady—though I can bring Jenny to prove that, at that very time as he ſays I was ſitting along with 'Squire Orlando in his own ſtudy, I was faſt aſleep up ſtairs—And ſo if Pattenſon does make a noiſe about it, Jenny offers to take her bible oath before the Juſtice."

"I think," ſaid Monimia, acquiring a little courage from the hope ſhe now entertained that ſhe had not been diſtinguiſhed, "I think it is much better to ſay nothing about it."

"So I tells him," anſwered Betty; "but he is ſo crazy anger'd with me that he won't hear nothing I can ſay—and there to be ſure I owns I *ſhould* like to know who this puſs is."

"Why," replied Monimia, "what can it ſignify, Betty, to you?"

"It ſignifies to every body, I think, Miſs, eſpecially to us poor ſervants, who may loſe our

our characters. You ſee that I'm blamed about it already, and Pattenſon is always a telling me that Mr. Orlando has a liking for me, and that I keeps him company.—Not I, I'm ſure!—but it's very hard to be brought into ſuch a quandary as this, when one's quite as 'twere as innocent as can be. I'd give my ears to ſee this ſlut."

"Why, who did ever ſee her?" enquired Monimia.

"Oh! that's neither here nor there—ſhe was ſeen, and that's enough."

"I think it's impertinent in any body to pry into Mr. Orlando's room, and I dare ſay it is all a miſtake——"

"Pleaſe the Lord, I'll find out the miſtake," ſaid Betty, "and, I warrant, know who this dear friend of Orlando's is before I'm two days older—and I know ſomebody elſe that won't be ſorry to know."

"Who is that?"

"Why his brother—a dear ſweet man—He came up to our houſe laſt night, Miſs, after 'twas dark, on purpoſe to ſpeak to me.

I won't tell you half he ſaid; but he's a noble generous gentleman, and has a more genteeler taſte too than Orlando; and for my ſhare, I think he's as handſome."

Monimia now ſeemed to let the diſcourſe drop, and to be conſidering what ſhe ought to do. Orlando waited yet a little, in hopes that Betty would go, and that he might have an opportunity of ſeeing Monimia: but immediately the dinner bell rang; and as he now generally dined with Mrs. Rayland, he was afraid of being enquired for, and retired ſilently to his room, ſomewhat eaſier, from the ſtrong reaſon he now had to believe, that, whoever it was whoſe curioſity brought them the preceding evening to his door, they were actuated by no ſuſpicion in regard to Monimia, and that they had not even diſtinguiſhed her countenance and figure; and he meditated how to prevent any ſuſpicion concerning her—content to be accuſed himſelf of any other folly or error, if Monimia could but eſcape.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

IT was probable that Sir John Belgrave's meſſenger would immediately return, fixing the time and place where he would meet Orlando, who debated with himſelf whether he ſhould ſend the billet he had received, and that he expected, to his father. He had not yet determined how he ought to act, and was traverſing the flagſtones which went around the houſe conſidering of it, when his father's ſervant appeared, and delivered to him the following letter:

"My dear Orlando,

"I HAVE juſt ſeen Sir John Belgrave at Mr. Stockton's, who, on my account, as this affair really gives me great pain, is willing

willing to drop any farther reſentment, if you will only ſay to me, that you are ſorry for your raſhneſs. I entreat you to gratify me in this—I will not ſay I command you, becauſe I hope that I need not; but this unlucky buſineſs *muſt* be ſettled before the return of your mother, from whom I have to-day heard that ſhe will be at home to-morrow with Iſabella, ſince ſhe cannot determine to leave her in London.—I have alſo a letter from my old friend General Tracy, of whom you recollect hearing me ſpeak as one of my early friends. He is much acquainted with your uncle Woodford, and has been very obliging in promoting his intereſt among his connections, which are with people of the firſt rank.—Having met your mother and ſiſters at Mr. Woodford's, he has renewed that friendſhip which time and diſtance, and our different modes of life, have for ſome years interrupted; and as he is fond of field ſports, and your mother has ſaid how happy I ſhall be to ſee him, he intends coming hither to-

morrow for ten days or a fortnight, and brings your mother and Iſabella down in his poſt-chaiſe. This intelligence has put Selina, who is now my houſe-keeper, into ſome little hurry, as you know we are little uſed to company; and it prevents my coming to you myſelf, as I ſhould otherwiſe have done.—But I repeat, Orlando, that this uneaſineſs muſt be removed from my mind. Write to me therefore ſuch a letter as I may ſhew to this Sir John Belgrave, and let us hear no more of it. I beg that you will inform Mrs. Rayland that I expect company, and that you will obtain her leave to be here to-morrow to receive them. Robert waits for your anſwer, which I am perſuaded will be ſatisfactory to

your affectionate father,

P. SOMERIVE."

To this letter, which was extremely diſtreſſing to Orlando, ſince it impoſed upon him what he had he thought with propriety refuſed, he knew not what to anſwer. To

ſuffer his father to ſay to Sir John Belgrave that he was ſorry for what had paſſed, ſeemed to him even more humiliating than to ſay it himſelf——he could not bear to owe his ſafety to his father's fears; yet it gave him infinite pain to diſobey him, and was the firſt time in his life that he had been tempted to act for himſelf, in oppoſition to his father: and the apprehenſions of what his mother would feel were ſtill more diſtreſſing to him; yet his high ſpirit could not ſtoop to apologize for what he knew was not wrong, nor to ſay he was concerned for having acted as he ſhould certainly act again were the ſame occaſion to ariſe. After much and uneaſy deliberation, he at length diſpatched to his father the following lines:

"My dear Sir,

"Again I muſt entreat your pardon for the diſobedience I am compelled to be guilty of. Indeed it is impoſſible for me, highly as I honour your commands, and greatly as I feel the value of your tender-

neſs, quite impoſſible for me to make any apology to Sir John Belgrave: for, were I to ſay that I am ſorry for what paſſed, I ſhould ſay what is falſe, which ſurely my father will never inſiſt upon. It would grieve my very ſoul to alarm my mother; but ſurely there is no neceſſity for her knowing any thing of this ſilly buſineſs. As you expect General Tracy to-morrow, of whoſe military character I have often heard you ſpeak with applauſe, I entreat that you will rather entruſt him with the affair, and aſk him whether I ought, all circumſtances fairly related, to make the ſubmiſſion required of me; and as I am ſure I may leave it to him to decide for me, I promiſe that I will abide by his determination, and will not till then meet Sir John Belgrave if he ſhould in the mean time ſend me an appointment; though even this delay is, I own, incompatible with my ideas of that ſpirit which, in a proper cauſe, ſhould be exerted by a ſon of yours. Let this promiſe, however, of a reference

to General Tracy make you eaſy at preſent, my dear and honoured Sir! and be aſſured in every other inſtance of the obedience, and in every inſtance of the affection, of your

"ORLANDO."

Rayland Hall,
Oct. 20th, 1776.

Having diſpatched this letter, Orlando diſmiſſed the affair of Sir John Belgrave from his mind for the preſent, and gave all his thoughts to Monimia. The circumſtance of the man's appearing at his door, though much leſs alarming than it ſeemed at firſt, was yet ſuch as threatened to put an end to all thoſe delicious converſations which had ſo long been the charm of his exiſtence. Not to have an opportunity of ſeeing Monimia, was death to him; yet to ſee her, were ſhe expoſed to ſuch terrors as ſhe had undergone at their laſt interview, was impoſſible. In order to turn all ſuſpicion from her, he would very willingly have

been ſuſpected of a *penchant* for Betty, and have encouraged her flippant forwardneſs; but that, as it awakened the envy and jealouſy of Pattenſon, was likely to put him upon the watch, and to bring on the very evil he dreaded. During the day, indeed, he had now frequent opportunities of ſeeing Monimia, who was now, unleſs under her aunt's diſpleaſure, leſs rigorouſly confined than formerly; but thoſe interviews were never but in the preſence of a third perſon; and after what his father had ſaid, and what had happened on the alarming evening, he was compelled to be more than ever cautious. Tormented by uncertainty, and perplexed by apprehenſions, he paſſed a wretched afternoon; impatiently waiting till he could aſcend the turret, and at leaſt, if he could not ſee Monimia, obtain a letter from her. The hour at length came when he believed every one in the houſe were occupied with their own affairs; and having excuſed himſelf from drinking tea with

Mrs.

Mrs. Rayland, under pretence of being buſied in writing for his father, he ſtole ſoftly to the room under that of Monimia, and from thence up the ſtairs.

He liſtened, fearful of again hearing the indefatigable clack of Betty; but every thing was profoundly ſilent. The letter, which he had depoſited there, was gone; but there was no anſwer. He feared Monimia was ill—the terror, the fatigue of the preceding night, had been too much for her. It was dreadful to be within two or three paces of her, and yet not dare to enquire.

Still liſtening ſome time in breathleſs anxiety, he at length determined to tap gently at the door; for he was pretty well convinced ſhe was alone. Monimia, who was really ill, had lain down; but, ſtarting at the well-known ſignal, ſhe approached cloſe to the door, and ſaid, "Orlando!—Gracious Heaven! are you there?"

"Yes, yes!" replied he; "is it impoſſi-

ble you can admit me for a moment? I am miſerable, and ſhall hardly keep my ſenſes if I cannot ſee you."

Monimia, without replying, moved her bed and admitted him. It was already dark, but ſhe had a candle on her table, and Orlando was ſhocked to ſee how ill ſhe looked. He ſpoke of it tenderly to her: ſhe aſſured him it was only owing to her having been ſo much fatigued and frightened, and that a night's reſt, if ſhe could obtain it, would entirely reſtore her. "But you muſt not ſtay, Orlando!" ſaid ſhe—— "indeed you muſt not."

"Why?" anſwered he—"Is not your door faſtened? Who is likely to interrupt us?"

"My aunt or Betty," replied ſhe; "for, though my aunt is at her tea, there is no being ſecure of her. I have ſaid I am ill, in which it can hardly be ſaid I am guilty of a falſehood; and as I am under her diſpleaſure on account of my unluckily ſtaying beyond her orders, yet ſhe may perhaps

haps be ſeized with ſome whim, and even the voice of Betty would terrify me to death."

Orlando, promiſing to go, yet finding it impoſſible to tear himſelf from her, began to ſpeak of what he had heard from Betty in the morning, while he waited at the door of Monimia's room after depoſiting his letter. "You ſee, my angel," ſaid he, "you ſee you are not ſuſpected; and that the impertinent brute, whoever it was that dared intrude upon us, did not diſtinguiſh you. Make yourſelf eaſy therefore, I conjure you, and let us think no more of this alarm, for which, though I cannot yet diſcover how, I am ſure I ſhall in a few days be able to account."

"But I ſhall never again have courage to venture to your room, Orlando."

"You will," replied he, "ſurely, when I am able to convince you that ſuch an interruption will happen no more, and till then I do not wiſh you to venture."

"Huſh, deareſt Orlando!" whiſpered Monimia,

Monimia; "Speak very low! I heard the door at the end of the paſſage open."

They both liſtened; and inſtantly Betty, by attempting to open the door, convinced them their fears were not groundleſs.—— "Lud, Miſs," cried ſhe, puſhing againſt the door, "what have you lock'd yourſelf in for? Open the door—I want ſpeak to you."

"Don't ſpeak!" whiſpered Orlando: "let me out as ſoftly as you can, and then tell her you were ſleeping."

"She has the ears of a mole," ſaid Monimia, "and I ſhall be undone."

Quickly and ſoftly, however, as her trembling hands would let her, ſhe aſſiſted in Orlando's evaſion—Betty ſtill thumping at the door—"I muſt come in, Miſs, this minute."

"I am laid down for my headach," replied Monimia as ſoon as Orlando was gone: "It is ſtrange that I can never have any repoſe! I was juſt aſleep, Betty, and ſhould be very glad not to be diſturbed."

"Glad

"Glad or not glad," replied the other, "I muſt come in. 'Tis an odd thing, I think, for people to puſh their chairs and tables about in their ſleep! If you can do that, I ſuppoſe you can open the door?"

Monimia now opened the door, and tremulouſly aſked Betty, who flounced into the room, what was the matter?

"Matter!" ſaid ſhe—"why there's a fine to do below—There's your favourite young 'Squire; he, as never does no wrong, has got into a fine ſcrape—juſt as I thought!"

"Good God!" replied ſhe, in a voice hardly articulate, "tell me what you mean."

"Why this great gentleman, as he affronted ſo, has determined to kill him outright—He have been writing to him about it this morning, and Orlando he is ſo ſtomachful he won't aſk the gentleman's pardon, and ſo now they be to fight."

"And how," ſaid Monimia, ſpeaking with difficulty—"how did you hear all this?"

"Why,

"Why, from Sir John's own man, a ſmart ſervant as ever I ſee, who is juſt come with a letter to fix the time and place where they be to meet; and he have been telling us how it is to be: and ſo my miſtreſs ſhe have heard of it, and there'll be fine to do I can tell you. They have been going for to find young 'Squire Orlando, but he is out ſomewhere or another. Miſtreſs is in a fine quandary, but ſhe ſays how Orlando was quite in the right."

Betty, having thus unburthened herſelf of news which ſhe was ſo anxious to tell, returned to ſee a little more of the ſmart ſervant; but not till Orlando, who had heard enough at the beginning of the converſation, had flown down to receive the letter which he had long expected, and now prepared to anſwer; though he was convinced that, by the buſtle Sir John Belgrave choſe to make, there was very little probability that he deſired to be very much in earneſt. The anxious night that this would occaſion to his Monimia was his chief concern. He

deter-

determined to attempt ſeeing her again, in hopes to alleviate her uneaſineſs; but he was firſt compelled to attend to Mrs. Rayland, who ſent for him, and to whom he now related what had paſſed before, and read the letter which he had juſt received from Sir John Belgrave, which ran thus:

"SIR,

"IN conſideration of your reſpectable father, I did hope that you might have ſpared me the diſagreeable taſk of chaſtiſing your improper behaviour. I ſhall be, on Thurſday at twelve o'clock, in the meadow adjoining to Weſt Wolverton, with a brace of piſtols, of which you ſhall take your choice.

I am, Sir,
your humble ſervant,
JOHN BERKELY BELGRAVE."

Carloraine Caſtle,
Oct. 20th, 1776.

To

To this billet Orlando anſwered thus—

"SIR,

"I WILL aſſuredly attend you at the time and place appointed; and have only to regret, that the perſons to whom this affair has moſt unneceſſarily been communicated, have ſo long an interval of uneaſineſs thus impoſed upon them. I am, Sir,

your humble ſervant,

ORLANDO SOMERIVE."

Rayland Hall,
Oct. 20th, 1776.

Mrs. Rayland, who entered into this buſineſs with an earneſtneſs of which ſhe ſeemed on moſt occaſions incapable, approved of his letter, and admired the ſpirit he exerted in a cauſe which ſhe conſidered as her own. Her fears for his ſafety ſeemed to be abſorbed in the pleaſure ſhe felt in having found a champion who was ſo ready to take up her quarrel againſt thoſe whoſe inroads had long diſturbed her, and whom ſhe hoped to mortify and humble.

Orlando,

Orlando, therefore, never was ſo high in her favour; but his own heart was torn with anguiſh, in reflecting on the ſituation of Monimia. As ſoon as the houſe was quiet he returned to the turret, made deſperate by reflecting on her diſtreſs, and thinking it better to hazard a diſcovery than to leave her a whole night in ſolicitude ſo alarming.

Monimia, who little expected his return, admitted him as ſoon as ſhe heard his ſignal. He found her in that ſtate of mind which allows not the ſufferer to ſhed tears; pale, and almoſt petrified, ſhe ſat on the ſide of her bed, with claſped hands and fixed eyes, while he related to her the whole of a tranſaction which he wiſhed he could have concealed from her till the event could be known. But it was long before he could perſuade her that the danger was infinitely leſs than it appeared. It was evident that Sir John Belgrave, by poſtponing to Thurſday what he might as well have ſettled on Wedneſday, had no objection to the interference

ference of the family he had taken care to alarm; and rather wiſhed to have the honour of appearing a man of nice honour and dauntleſs courage at little expence, than to run the hazard of maintaining that character by needleſs raſhneſs. When Orlando therefore had repreſented his conduct in the ridiculous light it deſerved, and ſhewn her how probable it was that his father and General Tracy would contrive to prevent a meeting, the fears of Monimia were in ſome degree ſubdued; and at daybreak Orlando left her, having inſiſted on her promiſing to endeavour to ſleep, and to make herſelf as eaſy as under ſuch circumſtances was poſſible.

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END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.